DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE TIMES

SATURDAY

August 1 2026 | thetimes.com | No 75100

V2

£4.50 £2.50 to subscribers
(based on a 7 Day Print and Digital Subscription)

‘Naomi, Cindy and me: our supermodel lives were insane’

Helena Christensen

Magazine

The men who swap the pub for a spa

Healey the iron chancellor

Economic stability is the priority, he insists **Ministers must find savings to fund new spending**

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

John Healey has told ministers that they must make cuts in their budgets to pay for Andy Burnham’s spending pledges, saying that economic stability is his “fundamental” priority as chancellor.

In his first big interview since being appointed, Healey told The Times that he and Burnham had written to every cabinet minister telling them that there was no new money to pay for plans to expand technical education, devolve power to regional government and help people with the cost of living.

Instead, he said, they would have to find savings in their budgets to ensure the government stuck to its fiscal rule of ending borrowing to pay for day-to-day spending by the end of the decade.

Healey also hinted at benefit cuts, saying that Britain’s “inexorably rising welfare bill must be controlled”. He added that he could not rule out tax rises in the budget on October 28.

“It’s a tough time for Britain,” he said. “We’ve seen the pressure on prices, we’ve seen the pressure on borrowing rates, we’ve seen the pressure on inflation.

“We [need] strong financial discipline. Andy Burnham and I start from a point where our fiscal credibility is the basis of our economic stability. That is fundamental to me, and my first priority as chancellor.”

Healey said that the unusual letter to cabinet ministers, telling them to reprioritise spending to align with the new prime minister’s priorities, was necessary to ensure fiscal discipline.

“We’ve written to the cabinet to say that if we’re serious about new priorities as a second-stage Labour government we have to be serious about — and they have to be serious about — reprioritisation of their plans, their budgets.

“They need to pay for the new things they want to do this year and next year within the budgets they’ve already got.”

Healey, whose resignation as defence

Continued on page 2

ABDEL MAJID BZIOUAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

EU crisis over migrant influx

An estimated 60,000 migrants crossed from Morocco into Ceuta, the Spanish territory, in a day, prompting Italy to suspend free movement with Spain. Pages 38-39

INSIDE TODAY

I had a baby at 49 — now men won’t date me

Weekend

Male mental health crisis

The doctor who has the answers

Magazine

UK’s wildest places to stay

(and swim!)

Weekend

9 771742 498264 31>

News

Today's highlights

7.05am The holiday park tycoon **Alfie Best**, below, on the new government's business strategy

Noon **Dame Carol Brayne**, the leading dementia scientist

3pm **Evan Barker**, the former Democratic strategist and author of *Nothing Left*

3.30pm **Andrew Ridgeley** on the new show *Wham! 10 Days in China*

5.15pm **Dan Vernon** and **Alex Brisland** on their new documentary *The Salisbury Poisonings*

DAB RADIO FREE APP 'PLAY TIMES RADIO'
TIMESRadio

TODAY'S EDITION

Body in suitcase suspect hunted

Police in Greece are hunting a heavily tattooed homeless man, who is alleged to have tried to rape a woman at knifepoint, in connection with the death of a British woman whose body was found in a suitcase in Athens. The man lives in the derelict building where the body of Elisabeth-Jane Ross, 38, was found. Page 13

Jail sentence for funeral director

A funeral director has been sentenced to 20 years in prison after 35 bodies and a hundred sets of ashes were found by police who raided Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull in March 2024. Robert Bush, 48, pleaded guilty to 67 offences, including fraud by false representation and theft from 12 charities. Page 17

Hamas agrees to Trump deal

President Trump has claimed that Israel is "very happy" with a deal with Hamas to disarm in Gaza. While endorsements poured in from around the world, including from the UK, Israeli officials maintained an uncharacteristic silence and a far-right national security minister called it "unacceptable". Page 39

LEADING ARTICLES 27 | WORLD 38 | TELEVISION & RADIO
WEEKEND ESSAY 30 | MONEY 53 | SATURDAY REVIEW

FOLLOW US
thetimes timesandsundaytimes thetimes

WEEKEND

FAMILY TIES
I admit it — I'm a competitive grandparent
PAGE 7

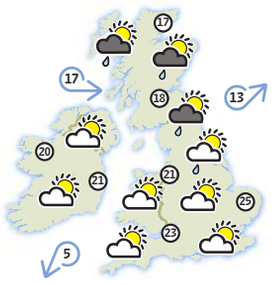
SATURDAY REVIEW

WILD THING
Brandon Flowers: How I escaped rock'n'roll excess
PAGES 4-5

SPORT

ROOT'S RETURN
Star batsman has his limitations, but who else is there?
PAGES 8-9

THE WEATHER



Scattered showers in Scotland and northern England. Sunny spells elsewhere. **Full forecast, page 70**

If a section of your Times is missing, please call 020-7711 1525 or e-mail help@timesplus.co.uk and we will send it to you, subject to availability.

©TIMES MEDIA LIMITED, 2026.
Published in print and all other derivative formats by Times Media Ltd, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF; telephone 020 7782 5000.
Printed by Newsprinters Holdings Ltd, Great Cambridge Rd, Waltham Cross, EN8 8DY; Kitling Rd, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 9HN; and Byramsmuir Road, Holytown, Motherwell, ML1 1NP.
Webprint, 2023 Bianconi Avenue, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin, Ireland. KP Services, La Rue Martel, La Rue des Pres Trading Estate, St Saviour, Jersey, JE2 7QR.
For permission to copy articles or headlines for internal information purposes contact NLA media access at copy@nla.co.uk; telephone 01892 525273.
For all other reproduction and licensing inquiries contact Licensing Department, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF; telephone 020 7711 7888; email enquiries@newslicensing.co.uk.

Energy levy review after BP announces North Sea sell-off

Emily Gosden Energy Editor
Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor

Andy Burnham has said he is "looking at" the North Sea oil and gas tax regime as BP announced it planned to exit the region after more than 60 years.

The FTSE 100 energy group yesterday said it had put its UK North Sea business up for sale, sparking recriminations over high taxes that experts say render the ageing basin "uninvestable".

BP is the fifth biggest producer in the region. Meg O'Neill, its chief executive, said that while the North Sea remained integral to Britain's energy system, the business would be "better positioned as part of another company".

The North Sea is subject to a 78 per cent effective tax rate owing to the "energy profits levy", introduced as a windfall tax by the Conservatives after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which was increased and extended under Labour. Rachel Reeves had promised to change the regime, replacing it with a new levy that would only kick in during periods of high oil prices to encourage fresh investment in the North Sea. However, that is not due to begin until 2030.

Burnham has indicated that he will take a fresh approach to the North Sea amid political attacks from Reform and the Conservatives on the government's net-zero agenda. He said there were "issues related to the energy profits levy that people have raised with me" and he was "looking at" these, along with approvals for two big North Sea fields, Rosebank and Jackdaw.

"I've indicated that I'll be pragmatic about the North Sea. When people are struggling and when we need to help people, you can't ignore the resources that you've got," he said.

It comes amid growing expectations that Miatta Fahnbulleh, the new energy secretary, will approve Rosebank and Jackdaw. Both projects had been subject to long delays as Fahnbulleh's predecessor Ed Miliband examined whether they violated the UK's climate commitments.

Andrew Bowie, the Scottish Conservative MP and shadow energy minister, said the Tories would scrap the energy profits levy, "paid for by cancelling net-zero projects". He added: "Andy Burnham should break with the past and do what the Conservatives have called for and immediately approve the Jackdaw and Rosebank sites and cancel their plans to ban on new licences."

Stephen Gethins, the Scottish government energy minister, said: "The UK government needs to take urgent action to protect jobs, energy security and investment in our energy sector.

"What is happening at the moment is that reserved policies such as the Energy Profits Levy are driving an accelerated decline of North Sea oil and gas before renewables are fully ready to meet our energy needs."

BP employs 1,100 staff in the North Sea with oil and gas output equivalent to 117,000 barrels per day last year.

In an interview with the Financial Times President Trump complimented Burnham for taking a "pragmatic" approach. "The one thing that seems to be loud and clear is that he wants to make his country rich, and he knows that he can do that by opening up the North Sea oil," Trump said. "I think that he's going to do it. If Starmer had done it, he wouldn't be right now sitting at home watching television."

Sale is a sign of UK's misguided attitude on energy, leading article, page 27
Report and analysis, business, pages 43-45

PM says Fifa president should resign

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Andy Burnham has called on the president of Fifa to resign after his plan to sell stakes in the World Cup provoked uproar across the football world.

The prime minister's intervention came as Gianni Infantino's senior adviser, Carlos Cordeiro, resigned in protest, while the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) issued a damning statement, joining its European counterpart Uefa and the Concacaf nations in North and Central America in criticising the plans.

Insiders said that some believed Infantino's days were numbered.

Kevin Lamour, Fifa's chief operating officer, issued a blistering statement yesterday, describing the plans as "the project of one person".

He suggested Fifa's "own administration was deceived" during the process, adding: "This lie by omission over many months and this unilateral exercise of power are not trivial. They are indicative of a lack of trust, a lack of transparency, a lack of discernment, a lack of good governance. And a serious lack of respect." He said his colleagues "deserve better than contempt and intimidation".

Burnham, who supports Everton, described Infantino's plan as "outrageous", adding: "The idea that it could even be brought forward shows that, in my view, [he] is the wrong man to lead the organisation."

Cordeiro, an American who was heavily involved in the 2026 World Cup said: "As a senior adviser to the Fifa president, a former banker, and a lifelong football fan, I cannot stand by while Fifa considers selling a stake in the World Cup. Let me be clear: I had no involvement in this proposal, and I oppose it unequivocally. It is a bad deal for Fifa's member associations, a bad deal for football, and a bad deal for the long-term future of the game."

He added: "Fifa already has access to extraordinary financial resources. If member associations believe additional investment is needed to develop the game, Fifa already has the financial capacity to provide that support from its existing resources."

The AFC said it stood "in solidarity with Uefa and Concacaf to protect the Fifa World Cup" after European nations said they would boycott Fifa tournaments if the plan went ahead.

With Europe (55 Fifa members) and Concacaf (35) opposing the plans, only 16 of Asia's 46 members would need to follow suit to have a majority of Fifa's 211 nations against Infantino's proposal.

Fifa insisted it would press ahead with plans to sell stakes in its competitions to private investors. "Nobody is selling football," it said in a statement. "This is not something Fifa would ever entertain.

"Our planned consultation process was disrupted by incorrect media reports. We will proceed with this consultation process to ensure that each MA [member association] has the ability to express its vote based on facts."

Infantino fights for his future
Sport, pages 2-3

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Healey vows to keep tight grip

Continued from page 1

secretary precipitated the downfall of Sir Keir Starmer, was Burnham's surprise choice for chancellor.

He left government over Starmer's failure to pledge to increase defence spending to 3 per cent of gross domestic product by 2030, which is expected to cost the Treasury about £13 billion a year.

Healey said he could not commit to meeting the target at present, but hinted that it would be a central part of the next spending review due next year. "At the spending review, we will set out a clear path to meeting our 3.5 per cent Nato commitment in 2035 and we will set a target date on that path for 3 per cent," he said. "That's the task. That's a priority."

Healey said that he had discussed defence spending with Burnham before Burnham became prime minister and that he was equally determined to "keep the country safe".

He added: "As you'd expect, we have discussed a range of things including the challenge of funding defence.

"The determination that we share is to do what's necessary to keep the country safe, and a recognition, quite simply, of that truism, that for any government the first duty is to keep citizens safe."

Healey also refused to rule out tax rises in the autumn — while committing to Labour's manifesto pledge not to increase VAT, national insurance or income tax — saying that he would not speculate on "hypotheticals".

He said: "I've got a job to deliver a budget in this autumn that keeps the momentum of the British economy going and keeps the fiscal discipline."

However, he added that uncertainty around the war in the Middle East made it hard to assess the state of public finances in the autumn. "That's a big moving piece for any financial planning for any future budget," he said.

The warning to cabinet ministers was given after a series of give-aways by Burnham in his first week in power, which are yet to be funded. The prime minister announced plans to cut VAT from consumer energy bills over the winter at a cost of £850 million, a £2 cap on bus fares at a cost of £500 million and £100 million of help for pubs and live music venues

Healey will also have to find £4.7 billion to fund the defence investment plan on top of cuts to existing departmental budgets previously agreed by Starmer.

In his joint letter to cabinet ministers with the prime minister, Healey said that "all new announcements must be funded from within existing budgets".

"That means being disciplined on spending, looking at the tough choices and being ready to shift funding away from unproductive or legacy programmes that no longer reflect this administration's priorities.

"Each department has a responsibility to manage within its budget, to control borrowing and help get inflation down."

Saturday interview, pages 34-35

Champagne with a side of nuggets

Young people have acquired a taste for fine wine with junk food. **Ed Halford** sees what all the fuss is about

JACK TAYLOR FOR THE TIMES

Ed Halford, centre, hears Helen Grylls explain pairing fish and chips with an All Angels Classic Cuvée. Mozzarella sticks were also on offer

Would sir like to try the 2016 Château Pétrus with a side of chicken nuggets? Or how about, madam, the full-bodied Châteauneuf-du-Pape with a packet of pickled onion Monster Munch crisps?

The thought may horrify sommeliers and wine connoisseurs, who are used to pairing a slow roast lamb or rump steak with their fine wines.

But wine bars are embracing such unconventional combinations in an attempt to offer a "light-hearted gateway" to fine wine while cutting costs and stripping away snobbery. They report a "massive appetite" for the pairings among young people.

Tom Grater, the founder of Crystal Palace Wine Club in south London, said his junk food pairing sessions consistently sold out. He believes this is part of a larger trend, fuelled by social media, in which young people prioritise better-quality wine over quantity.

"They may be less frequently going down the pub and smashing ten pints but with the tastings they can go there and have a genuine experience," he said.

Grater said the term "junk food" encompassed "anything salty, greasy, satisfying and indulgent" — from crisps and sweet treats to takeaway foods. He said the sessions offered a more accessible route into "the world of high-quality wine for people who don't always have tons of experience".

On a Thursday evening at Vining Street Wine Club in Brixton, Grater's second bar, 15 excited young professionals gathered for its first pairing session, inspired by the success of the events in Crystal Palace. For £45, it included six wines from Spain, Slovenia, Devon and Newbury.

Alex Scripps, 34, said the fast food element made the wine "super accessible across a diverse range of flavours", before cracking open a packet of Monster Munch paired with an 11 per cent Ciringoncia sparkling white from Spain. "It's helpful to get intel as I think it's quite a tricky thing to pair with wine," he said of the crisps. "There's lots of fat and salt in them."

Scripps attended with Daniel Harding, 35, who mentioned that after a few tastings, they had organised dinner parties where champagne was paired with chicken nuggets. At the tasting table, guests joked about their favourite takeaways while the wine expert Helen Grylls, 30, explained that the Monster Munch pairing would be followed by fish and chips alongside an All Angels Classic Cuvée from Berkshire.

Despite the absence of expensive cheese or grapes, Grylls gave an entertaining overview of each bottle. She explained that the £52 Cuvée offered a "classic frolicking through an English orchard smell". Lewis Catchpole, 30, scribbled on his pairings sheet that combining unhealthy food with alcohol was a "nice way to learn about wines without it being too academic". His partner, Emily Paterson, 33, agreed, adding that with restaurant prices so high, the price point made trying different wines "truly accessible".

Grylls followed the Cuvée with a Slovenian orange wine from Stajerska, explaining it complemented chicken because it felt almost like "a sweet and sour dipping sauce in a glass". As chilled reds followed alongside half a burger and a slice of pizza, Grylls said pairing wine with greasier food resonated with younger diners because it was "a bit more fun and tongue-in-cheek".

She added: "We're removing the snobbery and the expectation that you're expected to know everything about wine before you sit at the table." Nathan Rowland, 25, said traditional tastings could feel "overly stuffy when everyone takes themselves too seriously". To finish the evening, sweet Turkish delights were paired with the "blossoms and aromatics" of a £27 Pedralonga red from Rias Baixas, Spain. Hannah Warren-Miell, a 30-year-old doctor, said: "Wine tasting can feel esoteric, but this gives you an 'in' — everyone has had Monster Munch crisps and chicken nuggets. It gives you a way in to access the wine which is helpful for me who doesn't know much about wine."

Chris Cassell, 41, who runs McDonald's-and-wine tasting sessions at his bars in Fitzrovia and Islington, said those in attendance were generally "young people who we would never normally see", adding: "Usually with this tasting it's people who have very little knowledge of wine and they come to learn a little bit more and have a fun evening." He said wine drinkers were cutting back on the amount they drank each week, but would increasingly "splash out every now and then on more of an experience with friends".

How to wash down your next takeaway

The wine expert Henry Jeffreys recommends the following pairings:

Fish and chips Champagne Krug or Nyetimber Blanc.
Pizza Brunello di Montalcino or a Super Tuscan such as sassicaia.
Indian food Châteauneuf-du-Pape or Gigondas with meat; sancerre with lighter meals.
Chinese a young red burgundy or an Oloroso sherry
Burger and chips Château Mouton Rothschild or Château Cheval Blanc
Fried chicken a syrah from the northern Rhône such as Crozes-Hermitage or a lighter shiraz from Australia.
Pad Thai an off-dry riesling from the Rhine or a Schloss Johannisberg.

Tipping point: when do coffee lovers find it too hot to handle?

Andy Silvester London Editor

Britons now drink almost 100 million cups of coffee a day and almost one in five of us visit a coffee shop every day, even at the height of summer.

Come summer, though, many coffee lovers switch their regular hot drink for an iced alternative.

Now one coffee shop owner in London has revealed the exact temperature at which customers abandon their hot coffees for an iced version: 28.1C.

Tim Ridley, who runs Ensemble in King's Cross, ran his sales data for the year so far against daily weather averages to find out just how strong the correlation was between orders of cold coffee and hot weather.

After plotting that data, 28.1C appeared to be the point when more than 50 per cent of orders at his store were iced or chilled.

Not everybody waits for the heat: 6 per cent of coffee orders in January's near-freezing temperatures were for iced drinks. However, in the summer heatwaves, that number jumps to more than 60 per cent.

Whether an iced coffee actually helps drinkers cool down, however, depends on other factors.

It is an article of faith across warmer, coffee-drinking cultures that hot drinks cool you down on a hot day by triggering sweating reactions.

In an oft-quoted study by a team of Canadian scientists, one group of exercising cyclists were given cold drinks, and another group hot. The

More than 60 per cent of coffee orders in recent heatwaves are for iced drinks

latter counterintuitively recorded lower overall temperatures.

The scientist behind the study, however, added an important caveat: hot drinks will not cool you down if it is overly humid — like the muggy weather seen in much of Britain in recent days — because the sweat produced by a hotter coffee will not evaporate properly.

Either way, coffee connoisseurs are taking the rise of iced coffee seriously.

"The flavours of coffee do vary a lot depending on whether they're hot or cold," said Howard Gill, head of coffee at Grind, the coffee shop chain and pod manufacturer.

"A hot flat white for example is a very sweet, creamy thing, whereas an iced version is still sweet but more clean and bittersweet."

Barista's tips for making the perfect drink

The truth is, you don't need much kit to make brilliant iced coffee at home (Howard Gill, from Grind, writes).

If you've got one, the simplest way is to pop a pod into your machine, hit go and pour it straight over ice with a little stir.

To get close to a café-style iced coffee at home, start by making a stronger (dilutable, basically) coffee — I'd roughly double the amount of coffee that I'm using in, say, a French press or AeroPress, and brew for a little less time.

It would be great to add cold milk or water with ice.

However, if you've got a bit of time and organisation, cold brew is really where it's at.

Put 16g of coarse ground coffee in a flask or large jar and then add 250ml of room-temperature water. Don't shake the mixture but maybe stir it gently.

Put the vessel in the fridge at about 3pm, and by breakfast time you've got a proper cold brew.

Pass the liquid through a French press or paper filter to remove the grounds. And enjoy.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP

Pick your battles The gardener Daniel Dickson picks wildflowers from the remodelled terrace at Raby Castle in Co Durham, a well-preserved medieval fortress

Life in England's only council giving free social care at home

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Laura Balbuena breaks into a song as her carer, Kenza Maduro, brings her a drink and a slice of cake. For the past five years, staff have visited Balbuena four times a day at her one-bedroom flat in Hammersmith, west London.

"I'm always singing," Balbuena, 87, said. "I'm not very mobile but I am very happy. I'd rather be here than in a care home." She has needed daily assistance with washing, getting out of bed, dressing and eating since breaking her hip in a fall in 2020.

Unlike almost all other elderly people who need care, Balbuena has "not had to pay a penny" for hers. This is because she lives in the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham — the only place in England where the council provides free at-home social care to its residents.

More than 1,500 people a year here get free support with day-to-day living. By helping them to stay independent at home, the scheme has taken pressure off local NHS hospitals.

The number of over-65s in the borough who live in care homes has almost halved from 850 to 475 since care charges were abolished in 2014. Hammersmith & Fulham now has the fourth-lowest proportion of elderly residents living in nursing homes among England's 153 councils.

Andy Burnham has previously proposed rolling out this model of free personal care across the country as the "first step" towards a national care service. In a major social care speech on Wednesday, the prime minister said there must be a "principle of home care wherever possible". The policy costs Hammersmith & Fulham £19 million a year, but the Labour-run council pays for this without any extra taxes, by "managing council budgets with ruthless financial efficiency".

Laura Balbuena, who needs daily assistance from her carer Kenza Maduro, says: "I'm not very mobile but I am very happy"

For anyone with disability, illness, frailty or dementia, home care is free regardless of their personal wealth. In other councils, everyone must contribute — those with more than £23,250 in savings have to pay in full, while others have to pay on a sliding scale out of their pension and savings.

Maduro, 21, has worked as a carer in Hammersmith for three years with Cera, the leading social care provider in the area. When meeting new clients for the first time, she often "sees the relief in their eyes" when they are told they won't have to pay.

She adds: "If they had to pay for it, I don't think they would. They might need care four times a day but could only afford it once or twice a week. It means they would have to stay in bed the whole day."

In other parts of the country, home care is tightly rationed. But providing care according to need allows people to receive support earlier, helping to prevent problems from escalating and saving money in the long run. A hospital bed costs about £562 a day, compared with about £200 for a care home bed and about £125 for four hours of daily home care.

Data from Cera, which provides care for more than 400 residents a month in Hammersmith & Fulham, shows they prevented 296 hospitalisations in the borough last year. The firm uses AI tools to spot health deteriorations before they happen, cutting hospital admissions by 50 per cent.

Dr Ben Maruthappu, the founder and chief executive of Cera, said that "for the cost of a single night in hospital, we can support someone for an entire week in the place they actually want to be — their own home".

Figures suggest that free home care has also reduced the problem of delayed discharges, which occur when elderly people get stuck in hospital waiting for a care package. The NHS is happier to send patients home knowing they already have daily care lined up.

Alex Sanderson, the deputy leader of Hammersmith & Fulham council, said that free home care "fundamentally feels like the right thing to do". It also means more people are able to access help — the council has the highest rate of home care users in all of London.

Ben Coleman, the Labour MP for Chelsea and Fulham, was a councillor when charges were abolished in 2014. Despite "very, very tight budgets", it was possible as Hammersmith and Fulham council has "a mantra of being ruthlessly financially efficient", he said. "With sufficient political will, it can be done locally."

He added: "We felt that you don't pay for healthcare, why should you pay for social care? It is effectively a tax on disability, frailty, illness and old age."

Coleman has spoken with Baroness Casey of Blackstock, who is leading a national review of social care, about the system in Hammersmith. However, he said other local authorities with older populations and weaker tax bases would struggle to afford free home care without an injection of cash from the Treasury. According to modelling by the Health Foundation, expanding free home care across England would cost £6.5 billion if introduced next year.

How to pay for care (without losing your home), Money, page 53

Quintagram® No 2635

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Nervous, tense (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Not in any location (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

3 Case for DIY implements (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 *The Barber of Seville* composer (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Dairy product (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

B	D	E	E	E	G	G	H
H	I	I	L	N	N	O	O
O	O	O	O	R	R	R	S
S	T	T	U	W	X	Y	Y

Solutions see page 71
Cryptic clues see Review page 45

Pigeon cull at stations

More than 600 pigeons were shot with air rifles at London stations in the past two years, a freedom of information request revealed. Transport for London authorised 123 "last resort" overnight culls between March 2024 and March 2026 to stop birds nesting on ledges or becoming trapped. It said they were a health hazard and their nests a fire risk.

Cheat runs into trouble

A benefits cheat "too weak" to lift a phone was caught running a 10k and climbing scaffolding. Investigators found photos of Ryan Scott, 39, racing and bank records showing he had returned to work after an accident. Exeter magistrates' court heard Scott had claimed more than £7,600 he was not entitled to. He was given a community order and a fine.

Body is missing boy

A body found in a Devon river has been identified as Taylor Charlton, 15, from Barnstaple. He was reported missing on May 8, prompting a major search, and a body was recovered from the Taw on June 24. Devon and Cornwall police asked for the family's privacy to be respected and said: "We know how deeply this will affect the local community."

Hit record hits record

Olivia Dean and Sam Fender's song *Rein Me In* has broken a decades-old record for the UK's longest-running No 1 single, the Official Charts Company said. The track, released in June last year, has had 19 non-consecutive weeks at the summit. It overtook *I Believe* by Frankie Laine, which had an 18-week non-consecutive run at the top in 1953.

TIMESRadio
Breakfast: 6am to 10am
Our free radio station has all the latest headlines, interviews and debates every morning
Listen seven days a week
On DAB, app, website and smart speaker

Star academic accused of plagiarism: I am not a liar

A Cambridge professor tells **Fiona Hamilton** and **Emma Yeomans** he has made mistakes but other claims are 'cruel'

The Cambridge University professor at the centre of a plagiarism scandal has denied academic fraud, saying he had made mistakes but was not a fantasist.

Jason Arday, the youngest ever black professor at the university, admitted a series of errors in his work, saying that he was accountable for those mistakes but "what I am not is a liar".

In his first interview since he was accused of plagiarising the work of other academics, Arday told The Times: "It's soul-destroying because I've done everything I can to try and do the best I can. And I'm not saying that I'm perfect and I never tried to present this fairytale narrative that I am. I don't think people realise that there's a human being at the end of this. And they don't realise that that human being is someone's father or a son.

"I am accountable for the mistakes ... I hold myself accountable and other people should hold me accountable. We're talking about academia here. I didn't murder somebody. I think the cruelty that I've experienced and the positioning of me as this kind of liar and fantasist is totally unacceptable."

Arday's extraordinary back story was fêted when he became a star appointment at Cambridge in 2023. Diagnosed with autism, global development delay and dyslexia, he has described being non-verbal until 11 and overcoming illiteracy in his late teens. He says he learnt how to become an academic while working as a PE teacher, before achieving his PhD and teaching at four universities before Cambridge.

But his story has attracted increased scepticism after claims of plagiarism in his dissertation, which was produced in 2015 at Liverpool John Moores University. Arday, whose memoir is due to be published next month, has faced intense scrutiny over remarkable claims he has made about endurance running, charity fundraising and other feats.

Arday, 41, agreed to a wide-ranging interview to respond in detail to fresh academic anomalies uncovered by The Times, including inconsistencies in references to participants in his papers and the omission in a final paper of a participant he said took their own life.

He said his reputation had been maligned: "I'm being portrayed to be a liar and a fantasist and an academic fraud." He denied fabricating stories about marathon running and raising millions of pounds for charity, though he conceded he was part of a fundraising "syndicate" rather than doing it all himself. He said he accepted "responsibility that I could have been really, really explicit" in correcting that narrative.

He attributed some errors in his early academic work to his autism, saying his method of making sense of information relied heavily on mimicry. He argued that if anyone's academic work had been subjected to as much scrutiny it would show similar errors. Arday also fervently believes he has been subjected to a "dark arts" campaign since arriving at Cambridge, becoming a "lightning rod" for criticism of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. "There has been, since I arrived at Cambridge, a very well orchestrated and co-ordinated campaign to unseat me from my position," he claimed. "The motive is racially motivated. I think there's a reason why it's me, and I do think that reason is aligned to ableism and racism."

The first person publicly to reveal the allegations of plagiarism was Nathan Cofnas, a researcher who once claimed that in a meritocracy, black people would be famous only for "sports and entertainment". However, since then academics from various disciplines and across the political spectrum have called for an investigation into Arday's work, including Colin Mills, head of Oxford's department of sociology, and Martyn Hammersley, a leading expert in research methods.

In a sign of the toxicity of the row, a journalist investigating the sceptics' claims was reported to the police by Arday for alleged harassment. The Metropolitan Police investigated but closed the case.

The Good Law Project set up a petition in Arday's favour. It has been signed by, among others, Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader; Sonita Alleyne, the master of Jesus College, Cambridge; and Lord Woolley of Woodford, the principal of Homerton College, Cambridge.

Part of Arday's defence against a complaint of plagiarism at Liverpool John Moores University was to point to alleged racism, saying that a misconduct panel should consider the political context of a "war on critical race theory". The university set up the panel, which cleared Arday, after complaints were received last year. Arday's work contained passages that were identical or highly similar to the work of Paula Zwozdiak-Myers, a Brunel University student, published six years earlier. The statistical chances of Arday using the same words have since been calculated as one in 100 billion.

Although Arday did not dispute the allegations of plagiarism, he defended himself by saying he had received inadequate supervision and support, especially given his autism and "complex learning disabilities". He also pointed to "insidious and relentless strategies" to remove black academics by discrediting their work "under the guise of academic integrity".

The panel concluded in March that the citation issues were a result of "honest and reasonable error" and also detailed that the text overlap with Zwozdiak-Myers was "well within the accepted range of compliance with the academic standards of the time".

It also accepted that Arday's supervisory team had been "depleted" after he said he received only one formal supervision during his PhD, and that all other contact with his director of studies, Phil Vickerman, was conducted via phone and text. One of the two other academics assigned to supervise him left the university and he never met the other. Arday said the investigation should have been private but instead "took place in a court of public opinion".

That lack of supervisory oversight, Arday claims, is key to failings in his early academic work. He made substantial corrections to a 2018 paper, including replacing his entire methodology section with a new method academics said may be less rigorous. Exploring mental health issues for black and minority ethnic students at university, Arday quotes an undergraduate student who feared seeking help would result in being sectioned or sent away for some counselling. The quote is almost identical to one in a previous paper by the renowned epidemiologist Professor Anjum Memon.

Other quotes from his research participants appear to have been repeated across multiple papers, seemingly attributed to different people.

The Times also found inconsistencies in how he described his participants. In one paper, participant no 11 is variously described as a black female academic, an Asian female professional services worker and a mixed-heritage female academic. Such inconsistencies appear at least 25 times in three papers.

Independent experts said yesterday that failings uncovered by The Times warranted further investigation.

Arday said: "I think these are viewed as discrepancies, but I do not view them as discrepancies. I'm saying that they're different people who have very similar experiences in higher education as people of colour. It's more likely that I've made a mistake, there's a clerical error. It's not that I've fabricated."

He said the papers had been peer-reviewed but errors slipped through, and there had been big improvements in his work over time. "At the stage I'm at now, if I write something, I can afford a proofreader," he said. "You'll see there's a very big difference between the work I wrote post-2021 and the work I've written up until now." Giving a webinar in July 2020 about an upcoming paper on mental health issues for black and minority ethnic staff in higher education, Arday referred to a participant who took their own life and read out their quote detailing the "violence of these racialised cultures" in the academic world.

Although Arday's paper, accepted in September 2020 and published in January 2021, used near-identical quotes attributed to a male, mixed heritage academic, there was no reference to this person taking their own life.

He said: "I have no reason to fabricate or to exaggerate black people's suffering in academia. I have dedicated the last ten years of my life to trying to improve academic outcomes for black people. I have a track record for it.

"All researchers, within reason, tend to be selective. It's not possible to use every single bit of information. I have no problem accepting criticism that if that was such a salient detail, then it should have been in the paper. I may not have had the confidence or the experience to know that [at the time]."

Arday has faced questions about his claims of extraordinary endurance running challenges, which he said raised up to £5.5 million for charity. "I can't make people believe me," he said. "Nobody lives their life having a receipt for every single thing they say or they've done."

He stood by his record of running 30 marathons in 35 days, 300 miles in three days on the treadmill and 600 miles in 12 days.

He said that he did not raise all the money for charity but was part of a syndicate of about 100 people, but when he spoke at events or to the press the coverage focused on him.

Asked why he did not correct the narrative, he said: "Could I have ever guessed that somebody would literally comb through every single word I've ever said on that? There's no way because I never, ever guessed I'd ever be in this position."

The University of Cambridge said: "We take allegations of academic misconduct incredibly seriously. It is university procedure that investigations are carried out by the institution at which the research was undertaken. This is standard practice in the sector ... Allegations of plagiarism regarding Professor Arday's thesis and some of his journal publications have been investigated by Liverpool John Moores University and the journals in question."

We all fib — just stop before you reach the top, Giles Coren, page 24

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Jason Arday denied fabricating stories about marathons and charity fundraising

Comparing the quotes

Original quote from Memon, 2016

There was concern that clinicians had "the power simply with the stroke of a pen to decide whether you are going to be sectioned or whether you are going to be sent away for some counselling. Or [...] administered some really, really high doses of whatever kind of medicine"

(Male D. FG1)

Quote in Arday, 2018

There was concern that, in some cases, clinicians could potentially abuse their power. "Let's face it... with the stroke of a pen you could be sectioned or sent away for some counseling. Or...have administered some ridiculous dose of whatever kind of medicine"

(Male, black, UG, 13)

Comparing the quotes

Quote attributed to a "Female Asian undergraduate" in 2018 paper

"As a student who is a recent immigrant, my understanding of English is improving daily. As a result, sometimes I struggle to articulate clearly and accurately what I would like to say to the healthcare professionals provided at university. For this reason, I prefer not to discuss my psychological issues as they will misjudge what I am saying and then heavily medicate me"

(Female, Asian, UG, 4)

Quote attributed to a Latin American female academic in 2021

"As someone relatively new to the United Kingdom (UK), my understanding of English is improving daily. Despite my improvements, I still struggle to converse and make sense sometimes of what others are saying... sometimes I struggle to articulate clearly and accurately what I would like to say to the healthcare professionals provided at university. I am aware of the potential manipulation of my words and meanings... and so sadly to avoid a wrong diagnosis, I just I prefer not to discuss my psychological issues, as my biggest fear is being heavily medicated, which would mean potentially not being able to work and having my visa revoked...

(Female, Latin American, 38)

Watchdog warns about release

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

The probation watchdog has called on Andy Burnham to exclude violent and sexual offenders from early release unless they have been assessed as safe by the Parole Board.

Martin Jones, the chief inspector of probation, said he was "nervous" about how the government's new early release scheme would affect victims and the wider public as he called for extra safeguards before it comes into effect.

The prime minister is expected to announce changes to the scheme next week after his decision to delay it while ministers carried out a review, because of concerns that it will lead to dangerous criminals being released from prison after serving as little as a third of their sentence. More than 5,000 prisoners are due to be released early over the first year, including those convicted of manslaughter, rape and other violent and sexual offences.

Labour MPs backed efforts by the Conservative Party to exclude sex offenders from the scheme, which is being introduced as a long-term solution to stop prisons running out of space. It will replace the present temporary early release scheme, which allows prisoners to be released after serving 40 per cent of their sentence but excludes sex offenders — unlike the new policy due to come into effect on September 2, before it was paused by Burnham.

Jones urged the government to use the Parole Board to better protect the public from the most dangerous prisoners set to qualify for early release. He said: "If the prime minister asked for my views on it, I would say you have the Parole Board there, who are experts on risk assessments, who are there to assess the threat posed by the most serious offenders. It may be worth considering as part of the next steps.

"The Parole Board are experts on risk assessments for those who have committed the most serious offences such as murder and terrorist offences — people serving very long sentences who pose a real threat to the public.

"So there is an opportunity to utilise that experience when looking at the most complex cases as part of this early release scheme and providing reassurance to victims and the wider public."

The government could apply this change without having to amend the law by activating a clause in the Criminal Justice Act 2003. This allows the justice secretary to refer prisoners to the Parole Board before they are released if they pose a significant risk to members of the public of serious harm.

Jones pointed out that the Parole Board's workload had recently been reduced after changes to the law removing the requirement to review the release of prisoners recalled to jail.

The Sentencing Act 2026 replaced Parole Board reviews with automatic fixed-term recalls of up to 56 days. This removed thousands of annual recall cases from the board's workload. More than 50,000 offenders were recalled to prison for breaches of their licence or further offences in the year to March.

Jones said: "As part of the act, determinate recall cases are subject to release after 56 days, so that's freed up a lot of capacity for the board and they have more capacity than they would have done three or four years ago."

Jones, who was chief executive of the board before he was appointed chief inspector of probation in March 2024, said the government's existing early release scheme "went as well as it was possible to expect" and that the majority of people were released at the "appropriate time".

However, he said it had increased pressure on the overstretched Probation Service, which supervises a quarter of a million offenders in the community and has a 25 per cent vacancy rate. He said this made him worried about the impact that the new scheme will have on probation officers, who supervise about 35 offenders each on average. He said: "A good release plan is dependent on understanding the risk that people pose to the community — where they will live, the right licensing conditions to mitigate and manage the risk and also to provide reassurance to victims as well. I'm nervous about how it will work and will be watching anxiously."

Claire Waxman, the victims' commissioner, said the government needed to put victims at the heart of the decision-making process when determining what safeguards and licensing conditions to protect them.

She said: "We need the most robust safeguards in place to keep victims and the wider public safe and you need to be engaging with victims and listening to their views. That is really critical.

"Victims aren't ready for this. It's really important that when we communicate ... we give clear and accurate information because they've got in their head the date when their perpetrator is being released and if you change that ... that is really harmful."

The Ministry of Justice has refused to comment on the specifics of the scheme until the review concludes.

A spokesman said the scheme had been paused "to make sure we get this policy right for victims without running out of prison spaces".

Labour claim a win over Reform UK on 'abysmal' turnout

Labour's Bev Craig won the Manchester mayoral by-election last night after an "abysmal" turnout criticised by campaigners pushing for compulsory voting as a "damning indictment of our broken democratic system" (Constance Kampfner and Debbie White write).

In the lowest mayor vote turnout ever, only 25 per cent of eligible voters headed to the polls. When Andy Burnham, who is now the prime minister, was elected in 2024, the turnout was 32 per cent.

Charles White, of the Campaign for Compulsory Voting, said: "It's clear media coverage, voting reform and stronger mayoral powers aren't enough. Turnout just remains stubbornly low."

He urged the government to introduce Australian-style compulsory voting to encourage people to have their say in local elections.

More than two million people were eligible to vote in the contest, triggered by Burnham's election to parliament last month. But just 538,659 residents voted, Greater Manchester Elects said.

As no candidate secured more than half of the first-preference votes, Reform UK's Sian Astley and Labour's Bev Craig progressed to the second round to succeed

Rethink of Lammy's plans to restrict jury trials

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Andy Burnham has said he will look again at plans to restrict jury trials, admitting that he is concerned about miscarriages of justice.

The prime minister said his instinct was to scrap the changes that are going through parliament, under which defendants will lose the right to choose jury trials. Instead they will face only a judge if the sentence for the crime of which they are accused would be less than three years in prison.

Burnham said: "I have my concerns about the plan to restrict jury trials, partly from my personal experience, particularly in Hillsborough.

"So I want to really look in detail at that proposal. And my instincts are that we need to find ways of not reducing access to jury trial."

The plans, championed by the former justice secretary David Lammy, would have been the biggest shake-up of the English court system in a generation. They were designed to reduce the backlog of nearly 80,000 cases in the crown courts.

However, the plans faced fierce opposition from judges and peers. The Bar Council, the professional body for 18,000 barristers in England and Wales, the Criminal Bar Association and the Law Society have all declared their opposition to the proposals to limit jury trials.

Under Lammy's plans, defendants facing prison terms of up to three years would have had their cases heard by a judge alone or by magistrates, whose powers would have been extended to sentence offenders to up to 18 months in jail. Half of the present 15,000 jury trials a year would have been scrapped as a result of the proposed changes, according to Ministry of Justice modelling. It would have reduced the number as a proportion of all cases from 3 per cent to 1.5 per cent.

As mayor of Greater Manchester, Burnham supported the Labour MP Karl Turner's campaign against the reforms. Turner, the MP for Hull East, was stripped of the Labour whip after becoming a vocal critic of the reforms.

Burnham suggested that Turner could have the whip restored, adding: "I've asked the chief whip to speak to Karl and agree a process."

Senior lawyers welcomed the prime minister's comments. Kirsty Brimelow KC, chairwoman of the Bar Council, said: "It is encouraging if common sense is prevailing."

She added: "The evidence shows that reducing jury trials is not required to reduce the backlog of cases."

She said the council was "ready to work constructively" with ministers "to reduce the waiting for those in the criminal justice system".

Bar chiefs and others have proposed measures such as opening empty courts and improving court listing.

Mark Evans, president of the Law Society of England and Wales, said: "Our courts are under immense pressure, with backlogs delaying justice for communities.

"The new UK government must move quickly to set out a comprehensive ... plan to implement Sir Brian Leveson's recommendations. This should include sustained investment in people, infrastructure and technology.

"Any efforts to reduce court backlogs must not come at the expense of fundamental safeguards. Jury trials must be protected to ensure public confidence in our justice system."

Think tank: Turn water companies into co-ops

Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

Water companies should be brought under public control as not-for-profit co-operatives that work like the Co-op and Nationwide, a think tank has said.

The Good Growth Foundation has drawn up measures ministers could use to strip private companies of the utility without adding billions in debt to the government's balance sheet.

The policy paper includes a fast-track way to bring the likes of Thames Water into a co-operative model by lowering

# of sexual and violent criminals

ANNABEL LEE-ELLIS/PA

Burnham. Craig, the leader of Manchester city council, has long been tipped as the successor to Burnham, with polling suggesting that she would comfortably win the mayoralty race.

Staff and observers who arrived at 9am for verification faced a gruelling wait for totals across all ten boroughs to be collated, and first-round figures were finally announced after 7pm. Count workers passed the hours knitting and reading.

Burnham voted in Golborne, near Wigan, late on Thursday, casting his ballot less than an hour before polls closed.

Andy Burnham seemed to bore at least one youngster at a family centre in Sheffield yesterday. Bev Craig, left, hopes to take over as Manchester mayor

the bar for the company to be put under a special administration regime (SAR).

It argues this could include a "bail-in mechanism" similar to that imposed on banks after the 2008 financial crisis. This would "ensure that shareholders and creditors of failed firms are fully exposed to losses, and protect the taxpayer from any exposure at the outset", the foundation says.

Companies that came out of a reformed SAR would be required to emerge as not-for-profit co-operatives.

Thames Water is at risk of running out of cash by Christmas. Andy Burnham has threatened to bring it into public ownership, potentially leaving the taxpayer to pay the £2 billion the company believes it needs to keep running until the end of next year.

The paper, "A Watertight Solution for Public Control", has been submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Treasury. It is understood Defra and Ofwat will evaluate any proposals.

The paper also recommends putting the rest of the sector "on notice" with "enhanced monitoring, tighter restrictions on executive pay and a ban on dividends unless a company meets stringent new financial, environmental and consumer performance targets".

Companies could either choose to begin the process of becoming a co-operative, by transferring ownership to customers through a share exchange scheme, or be forced into an SAR.

Industry sources said the idea would not "reduce bills or improve performance". One said: "All it does is transfer the risk and billions in costs of fixing the sector to households, when this government wants to reduce cost of living."

Praful Nargund, director of the think tank, called the water industry a "case study in what happens when extraction comes ahead of the public interest". He said: "Mutualisation offers a different route. It would turn water companies into not-for-profit co-operatives, owned by their customers and run for their customers, with failing shareholders and creditors absorbing the losses."

After the quick wins and a poll bounce, Burnham's honeymoon is nearly over

The PM has alienated some would-be allies, write **Oliver Wright**, **Aubrey Allegretti** and **Constance Kampfner**

If Ed Miliband still harboured resentment over Andy Burnham's failure to make him chancellor, he gave nothing away on Wednesday evening. The foreign secretary was in ebullient form as he addressed Labour's intellectual classes at a reception for a think tank.

Whatever personal disappointments he had endured in the past fortnight, the gamble of ousting Sir Keir Starmer had paid off. "I tell you, I feel hope is in the air," Miliband declared at the Institute for Public Policy Research event. "I think what is so inspiring about this moment ... is Andy has a project for the country, and we know what it is."

Burnham's mission to "end 40 years of neoliberalism", he added, was the crucial difference to what had gone before. "It's always my lesson of politics ... unless you have a North Star, then events, dear boy, events basically screw you." Veterans of Westminster's end-of-term summer party circuit will be wearily familiar with such upbeat rhetoric but, at the end of Burnham's second full week in office, there are signs — however tentative — the public may agree.

Inside government, there remains considerable uncertainty and growing tension over just how straightforwardly the prime minister and his team will be able to make good on it all.

For now, at least, the electorate appears to like what it is hearing. While there was no immediate bounce in the polls after Burnham replaced Starmer — in the week of the handover, Labour's rating increased by just one point — the party has at last drawn level with Nigel Farage's Reform UK.

Labour's national share, in a YouGov poll for The Times, of 22 per cent was modest, but still its highest score since November 2024. And, significantly, the boost was driven by a surge in young voters returning from the Greens, a trend expected to be borne out in a comfortable victory for Bev Craig, the Labour candidate for the Greater Manchester mayoral election, a contest the party was not long ago expected to lose.

The figures are stark and, for Burnham, an apparent vindication of his leftish rhetoric and break with Starmer's gloomy technocracy. In June only 14 per cent of 18-to-24-year-olds said they would vote Labour. That has risen to 26 per cent. The number of these voters backing the Greens, meanwhile, has dropped 20 points in a month.

Burnham also appears to be enjoying a personal honeymoon. YouGov found that 44 per cent of voters thought of him as likeable, while 35 per cent thought he had the right ideas for the country, compared with 26 per cent who did not. In head-to-head contests on the question of voters' preferred prime minister, he beat Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, by 12 points and Nigel Farage of Reform by 26 points.

After his first week in office focused on the "quick wins" of cost-of-living policy — small but lavishly hyped gestures, including a cap on bus fares and a modest cut in energy bills — this week Burnham moved onto weightier, long-term aspirations. He unveiled plans to allow children as young as 14 to begin studying towards technical qualifications, set out moves to devolve tax revenue to mayors and vowed to make reform to social care the driving force behind his government. "Who knows how long I will be in this position, but as long as I am, I will do my best to find a solution [to social care]," he declared. "I am making this a test of myself whether I can bring forward a solution, or I would never forgive myself."

Yet in No 10 and across Whitehall, there is a faint sense of foreboding as cabinet ministers acclimatise to the intimidating reality of government. Already the stage is set for a battle of wills and personality that may yet rob Burnham's administration of its feel-good factor.

Before long the question the prime minister has mostly evaded over the past fortnight will intrude: how, exactly, does he intend to pay for the policy blitz that voters have been impressed by?

John Healey, his chancellor, told The Times this week that there would be no new money, and has written to cabinet ministers to impart that unhelpful message. Cuts to departmental budgets may loom, and that is before Burnham, Healey and Wes Streeting, the defence secretary, have reached agreement on where exactly the cash for increased military spending will come from.

Casualties of Burnham's reshuffle intend to make these conversations more difficult. In the autumn Darren Jones, who was removed from the Cabinet Office, will launch a backbench caucus of MPs to scrutinise the government's fiscal prudence.

Another former cabinet minister is privately preparing to criticise Burnham's promise of a lasting solution to the social care crisis — and the all but inevitable tax hike it will eventually require — as a gift to the Conservatives. There is also concern, even inside No 10, about whether Burnham will be forced into a U-turn on his pause to the prisoner early release scheme because of the continuing pressure on prison places.

Even among Burnham's allies in government there are signs of division. Some have begun to speak of a "coup within a coup". They believe that some of the prime minister's oldest allies, such as Lucy Powell, Lisa Nandy and Angela Rayner, have been sidelined in favour of MPs and aides close to his new inner circle: Louise Haigh, the first secretary of state, Anneliese Midgley, the chief whip, and James Purnell, the No 10 chief of staff.

Ed Miliband says No 10 now has a "North Star"

Haigh helped Burnham shape his cabinet, leaving a long list of victims described by one special adviser as "a list of people Lou doesn't like".

Midgley, meanwhile, oversaw the appointment of junior ministers, which left early supporters of Burnham on the soft left disappointed that they had been overlooked. MPs complain of a "chumocracy" in which friends of Midgley have been given plum positions, though these claims are laughed off by others involved, who say the complaints from the soft left are merely proof that Burnham meant what he said when he promised to build a united, cross-factional team.

There are also concerns about the prime minister's operation in No 10. Burnham has yet to hire a director of trade union relations, and most cabinet ministers have yet to appoint special advisers. Officials at Labour HQ are particularly put out by the appointment as political secretary of Hayden Munro, a former strategist for Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand from 2017 to 2023, as well as the deputy chiefs of staff Alison Phillips, a former editor of the Daily Mirror, and Caroline Simpson, the chief executive of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

None, party veterans point out, have any meaningful experience in Labour politics or the top of British government. Purnell, who does, was described by one cabinet minister as "speaking about No 10 as if it were an external agency over which he has no control".

Burnham will take a long-planned family holiday next week but in his absence his untested operation will have its first political challenge on an issue he has largely avoided: immigration. Reform will launch a campaign on the issue on Monday, the first in a series of summer press conferences. Farage, despite his own difficulties, believes it is the government's biggest weakness and intends to force the conversation to be about migrants crossing the Channel in small boats as numbers tick up over the summer. Burnham seems content to make it Shabana Mahmood's problem, though he did commit himself to visiting the Channel "shortly" to "see the situation myself".

One critic in Labour said Burnham's failure to build a "broad church" in government would come back to haunt him. "This feels like an 'old' Labour government with not a lot in it for the progressives," they said. "The hard choices have not gone away and so far Andy isn't addressing them."

Mayors await devolution revolution

The regions are set to be given more powers, but will they use them wisely? **George Odling** and **Sian Bradley** report

IAN FORSYTH/GETTY IMAGES

Kim McGuinness, mayor for the northeast, takes a selfie with other leaders at an event in Leeds. From left: David Skaith, of York & North Yorkshire; Paul Thwaite, head of NatWest Group; Dan Tomlinson, minister for growth; Tracy Brabin, West Yorkshire; Ben Houchen, Tees Valley; and Luke Campbell, Hull & East Yorkshire

At the heart of Andy Burnham's devolution revolution are plans for England's metro mayors to use the powers bestowed upon them to invest in communities, boosting housing, transport and jobs. Yet handing power — and a share of income tax revenues — to the regions runs the risk of not having a say in how it's used.

Some mayors have a different vision than the prime minister for how they would spend the money. Ben Houchen, the Conservative Tees Valley mayor, plans to create a tax rebate scheme and return money to his constituents. Reform UK mayors are understood to be exploring similar proposals.

Houchen's comments provoked a rebuke from Burnham, who has insisted that devolving power to the regions is not about turning metro mayors into "mini-chancellors" at local level.

The prime minister said he was "not comfortable" with plans to use powers for handouts, even though the government has insisted there will be no rules for how mayors choose to spend their shares of tax.

At a community centre in Sheffield, where he announced his proposal, Burnham said: "This is a policy for growth and investment. It's a very clear policy of the kind that Greater Manchester has benefited from over the last decade, where if you get more growth in your economy, you're given an incentive to keep investing."

Burnham has proved that a metro mayor can be a popular champion for their region, securing central government investment and applying local expertise to infrastructure, housing and social projects. Other mayors have enjoyed more mixed results, facing accusations of cronyism, incompetence and a lack of transparency. Here we look at five high-profile incumbents.

LUKE CAMPBELL, HULL & EAST YORKSHIRE, REFORM UK

An Olympic boxing gold medallist and former *Dancing on Ice* star, Luke Campbell transitioned into politics to become Hull & East Yorkshire's first mayor in May 2025 with 36 per cent of the vote.

His credentials and suitability for office were initially questioned but his promises to amplify local voices, revitalise town centres and support grassroots sporting initiatives proved popular among voters. A few months after taking office, however, he was accused by opposition councillors of promising constituents a £1 million community fund that was not in the long-term budget and was never presented to the authority's executive board.

Campbell declared the fund would represent "a million pounds every year for the next four years". But the money did not appear in the authority's financial plan beyond the first year.

Soon after the fund was established, Campbell awarded £5,000 to his son's football team, Hessle Rangers, to be put towards a new clubhouse.

Campbell was also criticised for spending almost £1.2 million on agencies while recruiting six directors to the Hull & East Yorkshire Combined Authority (HEYCA). Recruiting so many staff members became necessary because, three months into the role, Campbell asked five senior employees to resign after a series of conflicts over local government protocol. An anonymous source told The Telegraph at the time that the mayor had created a "toxic working environment".

Campbell insisted the employees were underperforming and had been "blocking" his agenda.

The Reform mayor, who is paid £72,000 to represent 600,000 people, has also drawn condemnation for failing to appear at two quarterly mayoral council meetings with senior cabinet ministers, which caused him to miss an opportunity to speak with senior members of government about policy and regional funding.

Jack Haines, a Liberal Democrat councillor, said: "It was important to give Campbell the benefit of the doubt initially... but he has proven himself to be completely useless."

HEYCA was contacted for comment.

STEVE ROTHERAM, LIVERPOOL, LABOUR

A close friend of Burnham, with whom he co-authored a book, Steve Rotheram's policies closely resemble those of the former mayor of Greater Manchester.

Burnham's success story as mayor was the creation of the Bee Network, taking back control of the transport system and "franchising" local buses.

Rotheram, who became mayor in 2017 after seven years as MP for Liverpool Walton, used the same legislation to adopt an almost identical approach — even painting the buses a similar shade of yellow to those in Manchester. Rotheram also oversaw a £500 million overhaul of the regional rail fleet and delivered the region's first new railway station in two decades at Maghull North.

Steve Rotheram, the mayor of Liverpool

Like Burnham, Rotheram also pledged to tackle homelessness in the city. His project, Housing First, was awarded £7.7 million from central government to provide secure accommodation for hundreds of rough sleepers. A review concluded his model was 3.5 times more effective at helping chronically homeless individuals secure and keep a home, compared with a traditional homelessness service.

ANDREA JENKYNS, GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE, REFORM UK

Four months after she became the first Reform UK mayor, Dame Andrea Jenkyns stepped on to the stage at the party's conference in a sparkling blue sequinned jumpsuit, singing a song she had written called *Insomniac*.

The former Conservative minister for skills under Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, who was sacked by Rishi Sunak, told the crowd: "I was always a bit of a rebel."

Her defection to Reform and mayoral election win in May last year were hailed as big wins for the party.

Jenkyns would highlight her refusal to implement a mayoral precept on constituents and securing millions in funding from central government for local infrastructure as notable successes. But her short tenure as mayor of Greater Lincolnshire has already been punctuated with environmental controversies and clashes with colleagues.

Within a month of her election, Jenkyns began reaching out to an American oil and gas dynasty about the possibility of fracking in Lincolnshire, despite the practice being effectively banned in England over fears it could trigger earthquakes. She also opposed local renewable energy schemes, including the installation of solar panels and batteries on council buildings, for which £602,000 funding from central government had been offered.

Last month Jenkyns was accused of storming out of a meeting over a heated discussion about civil unrest after the murder of Henry Nowak. She said reports of this were exaggerated.

BEN HOUCHEN, TEES VALLEY CONSERVATIVE

The mayor can count himself among Britain's most successful local politicians, having won a third term in 2024.

Yet his defining project, the redevelopment of the 4,500-acre steelworks site in Redcar, has been mired in controversy.

Lord Houchen of High Leven, who named his dog Boris after his ennoblement by the former prime minister, was accused of cronyism after a 90 per cent stake in the company operating the site was transferred to two local developers without a public tender process.

More than £500 million of taxpayers' money has been spent, and the two businessmen, Chris Musgrave and Martin Corney, have extracted at least £120 million via dividends and other payments.

The two men have the option to buy the land for £1 an acre and Private Eye reported that the tech firm Anthropic is in advanced talks about purchasing some of the site for £220 million to build data centres on it. Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) insisted no agreement was made with Anthropic. A 2024 government review into the nature of the deal with Musgrave and Corney found "no evidence of illegality" but made 28 recommendations for improvements in governance and transparency. TVCA claims the site is expected to generate £2 billion in business rates, but there remain concerns about slow progress on the project.

The six-storey Steel House building which was intended to be the headquarters of the Teesworks complex remains derelict five years after plans to redevelop it were announced.

A spokesperson said "In less than a decade, we've secured more than £7 billion of private sector investment, created thousands of high-quality jobs, and turned a site that was once costing taxpayers tens of millions each year into one that is now generating real, sustained economic value for our region and the public finances."

OLIVER COPPARD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE, LABOUR

Elected in 2022, Oliver Coppard announced a £2.2 million fund to provide a safe sleeping space for every child aged under five in South Yorkshire.

He also brought the Sheffield Supertram back under public control and promised to build a more reliable service with a £110 million investment.

The move has been positively received, as has a freeze on fares capped at £3, but late last year a combination of shift alterations and overcrowding led to mass cancellations.

In March this year, Coppard announced a development plan in Don Valley which he claimed would deliver a £1.3 billion boost to the local economy and create 18,500 jobs, with more than 10,500 new homes. The mayor claimed the plan would put Don Valley "back at the forefront of the UK's manufacturing renewal".

My fairytale marriage is now a £6.5m nightmare

Alice Wright Money Reporter

Meerna Faraj never planned to marry again after her first divorce. But when she met Sohail Sultan Ahmad, a banking executive, through work in 2011, she felt she had found her "knight in shining armour".

At the time, she was working in private equity and living in Bahrain with her mother and daughter, who has severe autism and is non-verbal.

Despite vowing not to date, she was drawn to Ahmad's charm and apparent kindness towards her daughter, of whom she was fiercely protective. The pair bonded over their recent divorces and their shared love of English comedy.

She could not have anticipated at that point that the relationship would culminate in a bitter six-year divorce case, which is still in progress and has already racked up £6.5 million in legal fees on all sides.

The case has become so convoluted a Court of Appeal judge this week rebuked them both, saying: "The costs, which are extraordinary, reflect the bitterness and distrust between this couple at the end of their marriage."

The row centres around whether or not Ahmad, 57, the multimillionaire chief executive of the Intercontinental Investment Bank (IIB), hid, as alleged, £16 million across five secret bank accounts in their initial divorce settlement in 2023.

Ahmed denies the allegation. The banking executive, who previously worked for Citigroup and Barclays, claims that he is so poor he has been forced to borrow money from family and friends to get by.

Today, Faraj, 53, is still perplexed as to how they got here. "Nobody goes into a marriage looking to get divorced," she said. "It's expensive, the legal fees are terrible."

The couple moved to the UK and married in 2013. Faraj, who is Bahraini, attended Keele University to study psychology with sociology. Ahmad is a UK citizen. For a long time, she felt deeply lucky. The couple lived in a £3 million Belgravia flat and had a "lovely, blended family" with her own daughter, who is now 20, and Ahmad's two children from his first marriage. Together, they had another daughter, now 12.

She said: "You think you're happy, you think, wow, I'm living my best life. I was told, most women would love to live in Belgravia."

However, things turned sour when she believed Ahmad began to "check out" of the marriage. His work meant he was travelling constantly and Faraj felt his disinterest in their domestic life growing.

When the world went into lockdown during the pandemic in 2020, Ahmad was forced to spend more time at home. It was during this time, Faraj claimed, he became more irritable and short-tempered. In October 2020, she filed for divorce and was successfully granted a non-molestation order. This is a type of order granted in the family courts to prevent harassment or abuse in domestic cases.

AKIRA SUEMORI FOR THE TIMES

Meerna Faraj is in a bitter six-year row with Sohail Sultan Ahmad, below left, over claims he hid £16 million

The divorce was settled in 2023 after what the judge described as a "blizzard of litigation." Faraj was awarded £6.08 million, £2.5 million of which was just to cover her legal bills. She was also granted the temporary right to stay in their Belgravia home rent-free.

But neither party was happy. Faraj suspected her husband had hidden some of his assets and Ahmad argued his personal wealth had been conflated with money that belonged to IIB, of which he is a majority stakeholder.

Last month the Court of Appeal agreed the 2023 settlement must be set aside and yet another High Court trial was ordered. Faraj's story is similar to that of Varsha Gohil, who was recently awarded £6 million after "Britain's longest divorce case" that lasted 23 years and centred around the fact her former husband had hidden his wealth from her.

The fact these cases took place in London is no coincidence. The city has become characterised as the "divorce capital of the world," especially for ultra-wealthy, international couples.

This is because the English (and Welsh) legal system focuses on splitting combined marital wealth equally, despite what each has contributed to that wealth.

This makes it much more attractive than many other countries where financial awards are less generous and maintenance is limited to a number of years.

It was little surprise then that Ahmad fought for the case not to be heard in London, since the couple met in Bahrain. Faraj, aware that her costs are escalating and her energy depleting, is hoping another trial will not be necessary and that a settlement can be reached beforehand.

In the meantime, she still feels her former husband is in control. As a full-time carer to her daughter, she is unable to work. She alleges that court-mandated child maintenance payments from Ahmad often arrive late and she is unable to meet essential bills. Her Belgravia home is "falling apart" because it requires so much repair work and she often is late paying her solicitors. But when her youngest spends time with her father, she is spoiled. The pair go shopping at Harrods and come home with half a dozen Jellycat toys. It leaves Faraj feeling humiliated.

She said: "I'm happy for her, she's having a great time but then there are basic things I can't provide for her at home. It's not a nice place to be, especially when you've worked all your life and you've had your own money."

She is also unable to travel back to Bahrain, even to visit her 80-year-old elderly father who is undergoing cancer treatment, as she has been advised by her lawyers that under Sharia law if she re-enters the country while the divorce remains unsettled she could forfeit her child to Ahmad.

Yet despite the huge personal and financial toll, she refuses to give up. Faraj said: "I do not miss the holidays or the shopping. I am not that woman. I never asked to live in Belgravia.

"It's not about the money, it's about the children — and it's about my self respect."

Tycoon 'unlawfully' ousted from his firm

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A private equity fund hatched an "orchestrated plan" that unfairly excluded a rags-to-riches second-hand car tycoon from the business he had founded, a judge has ruled.

Peter Waddell, who built a £500 million empire after spending his teenage years homeless in Glasgow, said he was the victim of a meticulous plan concocted by those running a private fund that bought a third of his business.

The entrepreneur, 60, who owns Big Motoring World Group, a car showroom that spans seven acres in Kent, was accused of making a series of offensive comments to colleagues, including a sexual remark to a female cleaner.

Waddell was sacked from the business by bosses at the private equity firm, Freshstream, who said they were entitled to do so after an investigation in 2024 upheld a series of allegations of unacceptable sexist, racist and abusive comments towards colleagues. Lawyers for Freshstream argued that it had legitimate cause to sack Waddell after the investigation.

Waddell sued and in a High Court ruling yesterday, Mr Justice Marcus Smith found the Scottish entrepreneur was unlawfully excluded from Big Motoring World and that his company was unfairly prejudiced by Freshstream's conduct.

Smith ruled that Waddell was sacked as a result of a "pre-conceived and orchestrated plan" hatched by Freshstream to take control of the business, not because of any genuine concern about Waddell's conduct.

The judge also found that one of the Freshstream directors, Reza Fardad, and its chairman, Laurence Vaughan, acted in breach of their directors' duties in relation to the removal of Waddell from the business.

When he was four years old, Waddell was taken into care at a children's home in North Ayrshire before living rough as a teenager in Glasgow. He moved to London to become a taxi driver and created Big Motoring World, one of Britain's biggest second-hand car businesses, from his base in Teynham, Kent.

The company is said to sell 60,000 vehicles a year and is reported to be worth about £500 million after extending into property and haulage.

In 2024 Freshstream exercised certain rights in the company's shareholder agreement to remove Waddell as a director and chief executive, a move that excluded him from the management and control of the business.

In his ruling, the judge found that Freshstream had been aware of allegations around Waddell's conduct before investing in Big Motoring World and that its executives were prepared to tolerate it. "Freshstream knew what they were buying into," said the judge.

Freshstream was approached for comment.

'Psychic' IT specialist said colleague was dream muse

Jonathan Ames

A "psychic" IT specialist who was sacked after telling a female colleague they had met in his dreams sued his former employer over claims that his ability was a "protected belief".

Elrich Daudet told a senior judge he had the "gift" of prophetic dreams and that a new co-worker had appeared to him months before they met. He added that the woman had acted as a muse for his poetry and songwriting.

But that woman, who was not named in court, complained to another colleague Daudet's proclamations were "doing her head in". As a result, Daudet was sacked from Computacenter, a technology and services provider with annual revenues of £13 billion, for "gross misconduct".

Managers found Daudet had sent his colleague "love poems" in which he likened her scent to "flowers in the Garden of Eden". Daudet sued the company, but the senior employment law judge in England and Wales rejected his claim, finding that the IT specialist's comments made the woman feel "uncomfortable" and "panicky".

In his compensation claim, Daudet alleged that his bosses discriminated against him because of his "protected belief". Rejecting the claim, Lord Fairley, president of the employment appeal tribunal, said the woman "thought he was coming on to her and that made her feel uncomfortable". Fairley said: "It doesn't matter whether he touches her or if it's in an email."

Daudet had appealed an earlier ruling from a lower tribunal but Fairley found there had been no legal error in the first judgment.

News Heatwaves

‘I saw Suffolk fire spread like fury. The noise was horrible’

A witness says that no one else was around when the blaze started spontaneously, reports **Lara Wildenberg**

The ongoing wildfire in Suffolk started spontaneously among heather, a witness who first saw the flames take hold has said.

The major incident has affected approximately 150 hectares, near Dunwich Heath and RSPB Minsmere, and the wind travel is currently south and southeast. Sizewell B, the nuclear power station which was “closely monitoring” the situation on Thursday, is located three miles south of the fire.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue said they are “in regular contact” with Sizewell B and that “there continues to be no cause for concern”.

The fire service said they expect the response to continue through the weekend and possibly into next week.

Charlotte Du Cann, 70, from Eastbridge, said she saw the fire take hold initially and saw no evidence that it was started deliberately.

Du Cann, who has lived in the area for 20 years, was walking back from swimming with a friend at about 5pm on Wednesday.

“I heard it first, I heard this crackle,” she said. “I thought that sounds like fire. I looked down and my friend said, ‘I smell smoke.’”

The friends were walking through Minsmere woods to Dunwich Heath and smelt smoke just before the kissing gate on the walking path.

Du Cann described the source of the smoke as “a couple of minutes” from the path walking over the heather, indicating a distance of about 20 to 30 metres away. “We looked down and we saw smoke coming from the place. We didn’t see any flames at that point. We went down and then saw a circle on fire, not much bigger than maybe 20ft across,” she said.

“We tried to stamp it out. It didn’t work because we weren’t forceful and we didn’t have firebeaters. I think if we had firebeaters we would have had a better chance.”

Du Cann said she and her friend spent “several minutes” trying to put out the fire.

“But then it just caught the heather,” she said. “Up it went and then it went and took [a] Scots pine, and we just got out of there. [It went up] fast. Within minutes. It was quite low with the heather, but it was furious. It’s really hot with heather because it’s tinder, but as soon as it hit the Scots pine, it went right up, like a torch. And the noise of it was horrible. I love those trees and the noise was horrible.”

The friends left and alerted the emergency services. “You can’t be scared if you’ve got to act,” Du Cann said. “You’ve got to get in and do it right. But I was pretty stunned afterwards.”

On the cause of the fire, Du Cann said: “I couldn’t see anything. I saw no human beings anywhere, we were totally alone. There was no evidence of a cigarette butt, or camping or barbecue or anything like that or even a piece of glass I couldn’t see.

“We weren’t looking for evidence at that point, we were just trying to get it out with our feet.

“It was away [from the path], it wasn’t somewhere someone would casually smoke a cigarette.”

Up to 15 fire engines remain on the scene after Suffolk Fire and Rescue called in relief crews from five other counties.

After battling the blaze for the first 24 hours, Suffolk crews rested while those from London, West Yorkshire, Sussex, Northamptonshire and Essex took over.

Henry Griffin, deputy chief fire officer at Suffolk Fire and Rescue, confirmed yesterday that there have been no injuries and no properties have been severely damaged so far.

An investigation into the cause is under way, he said.

The fire service added: “Crews remain at the scene, but thanks to intensive firefighting efforts, support from the helicopter, and the creation of fire breaks, an earlier identified risk to buildings around the Coastguard Cottages area has stabilised. Importantly, no properties have been lost.”

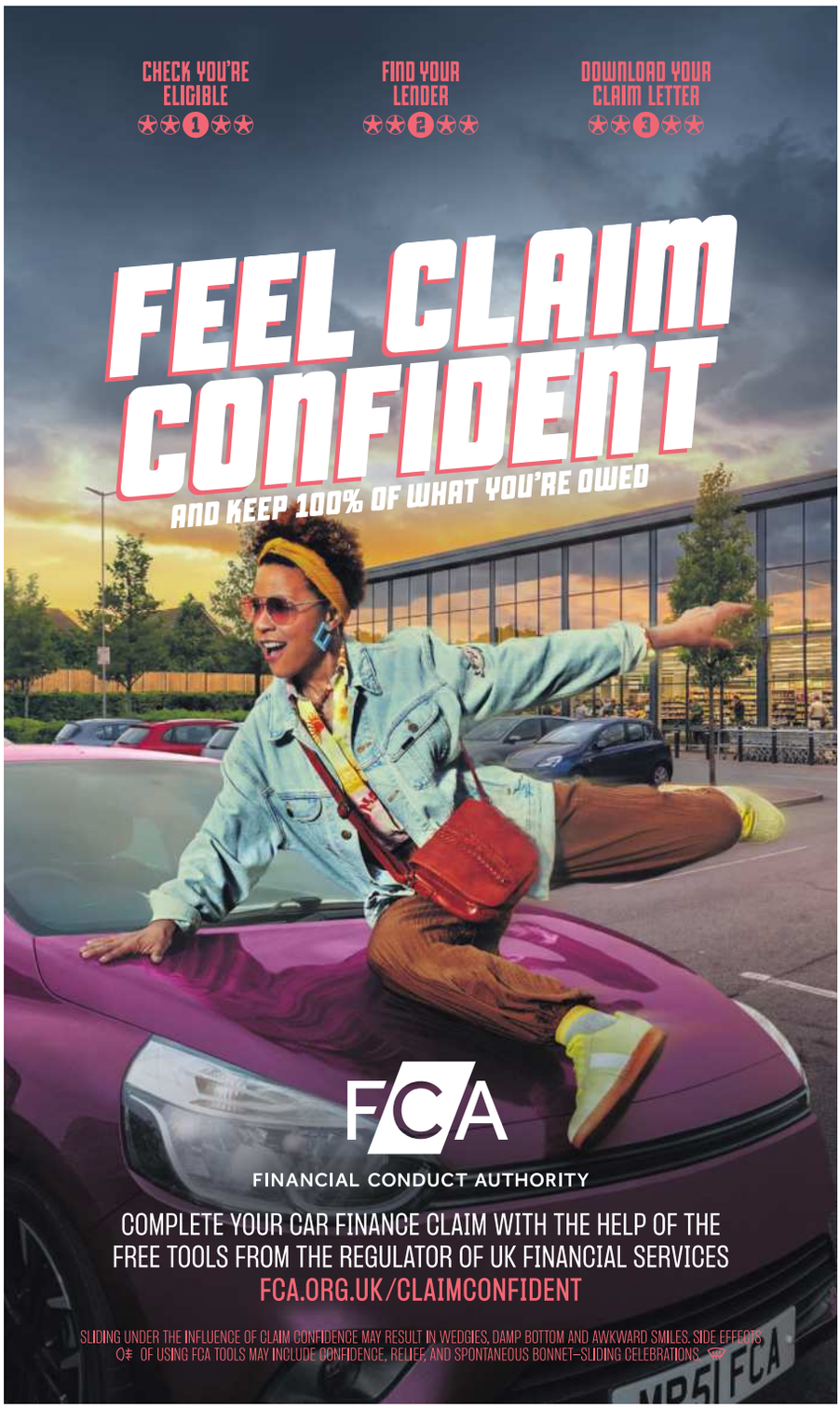
The wildfire that has scorched large

Among the specialist equipment, fire services have used 4x4s and off-road “unimog” vehicles to cover the heathland and wooded terrain. The National Trust has also provided a helicopter which on Thursday ferried 1,000 litres of seawater at a time onto the fire.

Griffin, who went to the affected areas at 5am yesterday, said some of the holiday properties had suffered heat damage, including “some scorched cladding, some melted gutters” but there had been no total loss.

On the landscape, he said: “It’s a post fire environment. A lot of charred heathland because it’s all lavender and oil-based growth that fire travels really quickly, it loves that oil-based pine or lavender, it’s oil rich so it burns incredibly quickly. So what you see is the remnants of that, the skeletons of that nature in place, it will recover but it will take some time.”

About 50 firefighters are also battling a fire on Ministry of Defence land near Colchester. The Middlewick Ranges on Mersea Road is home to nightingales and other wildlife.



JACK TAYLOR/REUTERS; JASON BYE FOR THE TIMES; HUMPHREY NEMAR

areas of Dunwich Heath will continue to be tackled by firefighters into next week. Witness Charlotte Du Cann, left, says she saw it take hold in heather and found no evidence that it was started deliberately

Skies darken over vineyards of Bordeaux

David Chazan Bordeaux

Geometric rows of vines, framed by a 16th-century tower and an ivy-clad manor house, evoke a sense of serene continuity within Bordeaux's long wine-growing tradition.

The calm of Château Smith Haut Lafitte is deceptive, however. Devastating wildfires raged to within ten miles of its vineyards this week, forcing hundreds of thousands of residents and holidaymakers to evacuate.

For now, Bordeaux's vineyards have been spared and the evacuees are slowly returning. But ever more frequent wildfires are adding to the pressures on a wine industry already battered by drought, heatwaves, President Trump's tariffs and falling demand as drinking habits change.

The blaze ravaged Gironde's pine forests and sent clouds of smoke across the region. Winegrowers fear vines that have been blanketed in smoke could produce wines with an unpleasant taste of ash, known as smoke taint.

"We were worried but the wind always blew the smoke away from our vines quite quickly," Florence Cathiard, the owner of Château Smith Haut Lafitte, said.

It can be hard to tell whether grapes have been tainted before they are fermented. Tasting them on the vine is not a reliable guide. Loïc Pasquet, producer of Liber Pater, which can cost more than €30,000 (£25,700) a bottle, said: "It's too early to tell whether smoke will affect this year's vintage."

Smoke taint is a problem Cathiard knows well from a vineyard she owns in the Napa Valley, California, which was hit by wildfires in 2020.

Smoke does more damage in Napa than in Bordeaux because it can get trapped between two mountain ranges and hang over the vines. Bordeaux is flatter and its proximity to the Atlantic brings shifting winds.

Cathiard said: "Our Napa vines were shrouded in dark grey smoke that just stayed there. In Napa, we sprayed the grapes with water to rinse off residual ash. It worked on all of them except the malbec, which has larger berries with thinner skins. We had to throw them away."

Sally Evans, from Bournemouth, at her winery in Bordeaux. She said she did not want to see any more smoke hanging over the vineyard, adding: "No one wants wine that tastes like last night's barbecue"

However, many experts believe smoke taint can be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate once grapes have been exposed. Jane Anson, a wine columnist and author who lives in Bordeaux, said the region was still learning how to respond.

"The big fire in 2022 was the first time Bordeaux had to cope with smoke, and winemakers here are still learning," she said. "People need to look at this properly, not simply dismiss it and say they haven't been affected, but ask what lessons we can learn to protect the vines in future."

The risk of smoke taint is greatest as grapes ripen and begin to turn from green to red. In Bordeaux they are changing colour now.

Sally Evans, a winemaker from Bournemouth who owns Château George 7, about 15 miles from the wildfire, said: "We had smoke on Thursday morning. I'm fairly sure my grapes haven't been affected but I don't want any more smoke. No one wants wine that tastes like last night's barbecue."

Even before the fires and smoke, this year's harvest was expected to be small. A very wet winter, followed by heatwaves and little rain, has caused grapes to ripen early. In Pasquet's vineyard, some leaves are brown and shrivelled. "They've been scorched," he said. "The temperature hit 42C on Wednesday. We're going to have to find new ways of adapting to climate change."

He has planted grape varieties not widely used for many years, such as mancin. "You can see how green their leaves are," he said. "They resist the heat better and the grapes don't ripen so early in warmer weather."

Despite the challenges, for many producers wine remains as much a passion as a business. As Anson said: "Bordeaux still defines fine wines in the global imagination."

Chinese embassy challenge rejected

The construction of a new Chinese mega-embassy in central London is set to go ahead after a court challenge was thrown out by the High Court (Daisy Eastlake and Jonathan Ames write).

A group of residents living near the site at Royal Mint Court campaigned against the planning permission, arguing that Sir Keir Starmer's decision to build the embassy was "pre-determined".

The government had faced claims it had been approved as part of a "quid pro quo" with Beijing, in exchange for the approval of a new British embassy in China.

The Royal Mint Court Residents' Association brought legal action against the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the London borough of Tower Hamlets over the plans to build the new embassy at the historic site opposite the Tower of London.

It argued that the embassy would affect the safety of people living near the proposed site and posed a risk to national security. The legal challenge was backed by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, a cross-party group of MPs.

Downing Street had previously argued that consolidating more than half a dozen sites used by China as diplomatic premises in London into one building would "bring security advantages to the UK".

Two judges dismissed the challenge after a High Court hearing this month. Mrs Justice Lieven, sitting with Lord Justice Dingemans, said in a judgment yesterday that there was no doubt that the government took the fact it was the Chinese government applying into account when they made the decision to grant it.

The judges added that it was apparent that the housing secretary "expected the PRC [People's Republic of China] to abide by the terms of any grant of planning permission".

The judges ruled that the "essential point" was that expert analysis from Scotland Yard's counterterrorist security adviser "considered a terrorist attack at the relevant location opposite St Mary Graces Court to be unlikely".

The ruling found that "there was no possible ambiguity as to the nature of the intended use of the premises", and that all of the rights of residents were properly addressed.

The residents said that they would seek to appeal the judgment. Luke de Pulford, the founder of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, said: "The fight continues."

Chloe Cheung, a member of the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong who is in exile after a bounty was put on her head by the Chinese Communist Party, said: "For many people, this is not just about a building. This is about whether people can feel safe in Britain. I came to Britain to find safety."

Sir Iain Duncan Smith, a co-founder of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China and a Conservative MP, said he would seek a meeting with Andy Burnham about China policy after the ruling. He said: "We've already witnessed the invidious sight of a British prime minister being shoved around on a red carpet, lectured by President Xi, with an absolute refusal to the British prime minister to really conduct ... serious negotiations until this embassy had been agreed."

Plans for the embassy in London have been met with resistance. Chloe Cheung, a Hong Kong activist living in exile in the UK, said it would make her feel unsafe

Father of boy in Cyprus fall asks to return for funeral

Ali Mitib

A British father prosecuted over the death of his two-year-old son should be allowed to reunite with his family on a "humanitarian basis" and attend the funeral, his lawyer has said.

The 37-year-old, who works for one of the Big Four accountancy firms and previously ran a start-up, was charged with causing death by a reckless act after his son fell from the fourth floor of the King Evelthon Beach Hotel in Chlorakas on July 12.

The father, from Essex, was arrested hours later at the five-star resort and held in prison for eight days before being released on bail. He was banned from leaving the country before his trial in Paphos, which is expected to begin next month.

Alexandros Alexandrou, for the defence, said that the man should be able to reunite with his wife and daughter, who flew back with his son's body on Wednesday.

"At the moment the only thing that matters to us is on a humanitarian basis to reunite with his family and allow him to grieve this tragedy," he said. "We do not expect the court will object to my client going home, back to his wife and family, for the funeral of his son."

The court was previously told that the child fell through an open window when his father was holding him around his waist and swinging him from side to side in the corridor next to the family's room as they waited for the lift to take them to the restaurant for dinner.

The father is understood to have denied this version of events when it was put to him by police officers, insisting that he was not swinging his son.

Police said a toxicology report revealed that one or two drinks' worth of alcohol was in the man's blood. If convicted, he faces a prison sentence of up to four years. His parents have flown out to support him.

Fightback against data centre boom

Mario Ledwith, Marieta Marinova

To the unknowing eye, they appear no different to the bland warehouses that line homogeneous industrial parks outside cities and towns across the UK.

But inside these unremarkable edifices, a digital revolution is whirring. These "hyperscale" data centres are at the centre of a gold rush that is in full swing in Britain, driven by the unrelenting advance of artificial intelligence technology. And to deliver its promise of economic growth, the government believes that Britain needs more of them and fast.

Having inherited this roadmap for an AI-driven future from his predecessor, Andy Burnham will soon learn that delivering it is likely to be far from straightforward.

Opposition groups are emerging across the country hoping to block construction, mirroring a protest movement that has swept the United States where data centres have become a major political issue.

The proposal to create the AI hub in an area of Devon bordering woodland where hares dash across fields outside a market town has inspired a community fightback. As concerns grow over the environmental impact of the energy-guzzling sites, British campaigners are being joined by celebrities.

The prime minister's MPs have joined those asking questions about whether the consequences of the AI boom have been fully considered. Burnham has yet to answer.

THE BLUEPRINT

After Sir John Betjeman poetically pleaded for bombs to fall on it and Ricky Gervais used it to depict nine-to-five drudgery in *The Office*, Slough Trading Estate became something of a punchline.

Yet the business park's 474 acres are home to up to 40 data centres, making it the largest cluster in Europe. Only "Data Centre Alley" in Ashburn, Virginia, houses more.

Slough's emergence as the data centre capital of Europe has served as a blueprint as the government seeks to tap into a global market forecast to see investment of £5.2 trillion by 2030.

Slough lured companies with its generous energy supply, proximity to fibre optic connections and looser planning requirements. Today, the so-called Slough availability zone powers companies including Google, Microsoft and Amazon.

A cascade of further development coming to Slough has brought concerns, with bigger and more powerful centres planned despite warnings that it is "at capacity".

THE RACE

While polls show the public remains lukewarm on the march of AI that may threaten their jobs, the government has been beyond enthusiastic with ministers saying building AI capacity is "foundational" to our prosperity.

However, the economic impact of the data centre boom remains something of an unknown. Multi-billion investments into "hyperscale" centres create thousands of construction jobs, yet once they are complete the highly automated centres require relatively small workforces to maintain. A £10 billion hub in Blyth, Northumberland, will create only 400 full time on-site jobs.

Many arguments for embracing the AI boom are not purely economic. As data centres hold information touching every element of our lives and AI essential for national security work, ministers are also keen to have a closer eye on the sector within UK borders.

THE FIGHTBACK

Niamh Shearing, the co-founder of Leave Devon Alone, has found herself at the centre of a campaign aimed at blocking a sprawling "data campus" on rural land outside Great Torrington in north Devon.

If constructed, the £13.8 billion site — which also features a battery storage facility — will be the largest data centre in Europe. At 850 acres, it will be bigger than Hampstead Heath in London.

"It's horrific, it's heartbreaking," she said. "We should be protecting these areas."

The developer Xlinks said that the site "will bring major economic benefits to Devon".

Similar pockets of resistance are emerging across the UK. The BBC presenter Jake Humphrey has joined objections to build what would be one of the UK's largest data centres in Keswick, Norfolk.

The wave of action has spread from America where the roll-out of data centres has happened more aggressively. Erin Brockovich, the activist immortalised on screen by Julia Roberts for leading a campaign against contaminated water in California, has led the charge. The campaign has caught fire, crossing the political divide, and putting pressure on both tech firms and politicians. Amid the outcry, New York recently announced a one-year moratorium on new centres.

Campaigners say conditions are ripe for the situation to be mirrored in Britain. Resistance is chiefly concerned with the environmental cost of powering AI, putting the data centre boom on a potential collision course with the government's net-zero plans.

Ofgem this week announced that 315 data centres are waiting to join the national grid. Collectively they would require 73GW of energy, significantly above the country's peak electricity demand of 45GW.

Matt Evans, from TechUK, said that the demand was "laughable".

Then there is the question of water. Campaigners, MPs and water companies have raised concerns about the water needed to keep the facilities cool as demand soars.

The government's revolution may be under way but the road could be bumpy.

Southport killer charged with attacking Belmarsh prison staff

Herbie Russell

The Southport killer Axel Rudakubana has been charged with multiple assaults on prison staff at HMP Belmarsh, the Metropolitan Police said.

Rudakubana, 19, who is serving a minimum 52-year sentence for murdering three children at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class, was charged with two counts of assaulting emergency workers on May 6 and October 28, 2025.

He has also been charged with attempting grievous bodily harm on May 8 and having had unauthorised possession of an offensive weapon in prison on June 26. Both offences were allegedly committed in 2025.

He was charged with the alleged offences on July 28 and will appear before Westminster magistrates' court via videolink on September 11.

Rudakubana was given a life sentence in January 2025 for the murders of Alice da Silva Aguiar, nine, Bebe King, six, and Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, committed on July 29, 2024. He also pleaded guilty to the attempted murder of ten others, including eight other children and two adults. Rudakubana, then aged 17, entered the Hart Space studio on Hart Street, Southport, and carried out the attack. Inside were 26 children, aged between six and thirteen, singing songs and making bracelets. He used a kitchen knife with a 20cm-long blade, which he had bought online some days before, to stab eleven children.

Axel Rudakubana has been moved to Broadmoor psychiatric hospital

Last week the Ministry of Justice confirmed that he had been transferred from Belmarsh prison to Broadmoor high-security psychiatric hospital.

Chris Walker, from Bond Turner Solicitors, said the families of the Southport victims were "deeply upset" at the decision by MoJ officials who concluded that he could not be managed safely in a prison environment.

Prisoners who pose an increased risk and cannot be managed safely in a prison environment because of mental disorders can be moved to secure psychiatric units, where they are treated as patients rather than prisoners.

Under the Mental Health Act, officials acting for the justice secretary must accept the advice of clinical professionals to transfer prisoners to a secure facility.

An offender in a secure hospital has to engage with treatment and undergo therapies. They can then be returned to prison if they no longer require hospital treatment.

Elisabeth-Jane Ross, wearing a blue top, with her sister. Her body was found on July 18 in a derelict building in Kypseli, Athens, left, but her mobile phone was used to send messages until her identity was made public on Wednesday

THOMAS GRAVANIS FOR THE TIMES

Police on trail of tattooed suspect over suitcase body

George Odling Athens

Greek police are hunting a heavily tattooed homeless man, who is alleged to have tried to rape a woman at knifepoint, in connection with the death of a British woman whose body was found in a suitcase.

The suspect, named Markos, lives in the derelict building where the body of Elisabeth-Jane Ross, 38, was found, but he has been missing since her death.

Locals have been questioned by detectives about his whereabouts and said he was a drug user who had allegedly attacked a woman in the same area, Kypseli, in Athens.

Hamid Reza, 67, said he had been interviewed by detectives about Markos.

Reza, who sleeps in a makeshift shelter yards from the building where Ross's body was discovered, said: "Police wanted to know if I had seen him in the area in the last few days and said it was about the British woman.

"Markos lives in the building where her body and the suitcase were found. He and another guy named Giorgios have made a sort of living room for themselves in there. Markos is about 40, dark hair and he has loads of tattoos on both arms.

"There is a Bulgarian lady who walks past me on the way to work every morning and she claimed he tried to attack her once when she was walking past the building after she had been out late one night. She told me he came at her with a knife and tried to have sex with her but she was able to get away at about 3am.

"He has lived in there with Giorgios for months but has not been seen for a while now."

The Iranian, who has lived in Athens for 35 years, added: "Police are obviously desperate to find Markos. They have been asking people about him and have also been driving around the area lots."

A Greek police source said: "We have a lead on a homeless man but can't say any more. We want to question a particular individual, but we are also looking for a number of other people as part of this investigation."

The source added that the alleged attack on the Bulgarian woman was not reported at the time but that police had been made aware of it while conducting inquiries into Ross's death.

Athens police acknowledge that they have been unable to trace the unknown "American friends" Ross said she was meeting three days before her body was discovered.

Ross, from Edinburgh, stayed with Greek friends in the Keratsini district in southwest Athens by the sea, but told them she was visiting some American friends in Kypseli on July 15. However, a police source said no one had come forward and detectives were unsure if the Americans even existed.

George Kalliakmanis, the president of the Attica Police Officers' Union, is not directly involved in the inquiry but told The Times: "I don't believe the Americans even exist. The police still haven't been able to identify them and if they were really her friends then they would have come forward by now."

Hamid Reza, a local, said the man was accused of trying to rape a woman at knifepoint

Ross's body was found on July 18, but her mobile phone was used to send messages until her identity was made public on Wednesday.

Her father, a lawyer from Edinburgh, told officers he had been receiving messages from his daughter's phone until the day she was formally identified, and detectives believe the killer was using the device to cover their tracks.

One text, sent on July 15 to a Greek friend, read: "I need some time — I'm going to a Greek island."

Other messages to family members said she "needed some time to herself" and "wanted to be alone for a while".

Investigators say the phone, which has not been found, was active in Athens until just before Ross was formally identified on Wednesday. Police confirmed they had no idea who Ross had seen while she was in Kypseli.

A source said: "We do not yet know who the people she visited are, or whether they are Americans. We are trying to find out where she went next [after Keratsini] and who she stayed with."

The Greek couple in Keratsini are not suspects in the case and have provided useful information to police during questioning, sources confirmed.

Family members have paid tribute to Ross, who flew into Athens on June 29. Her aunt, Anne Bangham, told The Scottish Sun: "It is horrific. We just can't believe it. She was such a beautiful, loving and kind young lady. She had not long arrived there to work."

Ross had been travelling regularly to Greece volunteering with non-governmental organisations and working with abused women, a police source said. Police believe her body was brought to the abandoned building on July 17.

Preliminary examinations on Ross's body showed no visible injuries or signs of struggle and the authorities were awaiting toxicology and post-mortem examination results.

Mourners have placed a bouquet of flowers, a candle and a photo of Ross with the message "an angel was here" by the graffiti-sprayed iron wall near the building where her body was found.

News

TONY KERSHAW/SWNS; PETER MACDIARMID/LNP

Sink in Godstone High Street in Surrey reopened yesterday, 18 months after a 65ft-crater appeared, forcing evacuations

Blind drunk went on 150-mile night drive across north

Tom Gould

A blind drink-driver drove 150 miles through the night by following the tail lights of lorries before he was spotted by police as he drifted towards the hard shoulder.

Anthony Hall, 49, told police officers that he had travelled from Huddersfield in West Yorkshire towards Cumbria.

Hall, who is registered blind, appeared at Carlisle magistrates' court where he admitted dangerous driving, driving while over the alcohol limit, driving without a licence or insurance, and taking his partner's car without consent.

Suresh Basra, for the prosecution, said: "Mr Hall was a man of good character and he has no previous convictions. He is registered blind and does not have a driving licence so he is not allowed to drive. But he took the vehicle in question from his partner without her knowing. He drove 150 miles from Huddersfield."

Police were searching for his partner's Vauxhall Meriva after it was reported missing, and identified the vehicle on the M6 near Carlisle more than two hours after Hall began his journey on June 29 this year.

"He was observed drifting into the motorway's hard shoulder from lanes one and two," Basra said.

"The vehicle was stopped and Mr Hall was spoken to. He smelt of alcohol on his breath and he said that he had been drinking wine. The defendant also said he'd gone blind two years ago and was asked how he had managed to drive. He said that by following HGV lights he managed to drive that distance."

A breath specimen shown to the court showed that Hall, from Huddersfield, had 46mcg of alcohol in every 100ml of breath. The legal driving limit is 35mcg.

Anthony Hall was drifting towards the hard shoulder when stopped by police

Hall's dangerous behaviour was "prolonged and persistent", Basra said, adding: "There was a decision to ignore the rules of the road and risk danger to others ... There was also the consumption of alcohol and although there was no injury, it's miraculous that Mr Hall has been so fortunate and that there was no injury or damage."

Adele Graham, for the defence, urged magistrates to order a pre-sentence background report and take into account Hall's personal circumstances and life history. Magistrates agreed to order a probation service report and will adjourn sentencing until September 8. Hall will be subject to an interim driving disqualification.

Briton accused of spying for Iran at military base

Jessica Sharkey, Herbie Russell

A British man has been arrested on suspicion of spying on a UK military base in Cyprus on behalf of Iran.

Rashad Sultanov, a 44-year-old dual UK and Azerbaijani citizen, is accused of conducting hostile surveillance at RAF Akrotiri and sharing information with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Metropolitan Police said. Sultanov, of Islington, north London, was arrested on July 17 by the Cypriot authorities and is in custody while extradition proceedings take place.

The Crown Prosecution Service has authorised charges against him under sections 3 and 4 of the National Security Act. He was detained as part of an investigation, led by Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) London, into incidents at the base between May 11 and June 22 last year.

Section 3 of the National Security Act prohibits conduct that materially assists a foreign intelligence service in carrying out UK-related activities, while section 4 relates to accessing prohibited premises.

Commander Helen Flanagan, the head of CTP London, said: "This case shows we are able to use the National Security Act overseas when British military bases are allegedly targeted by hostile state activity.

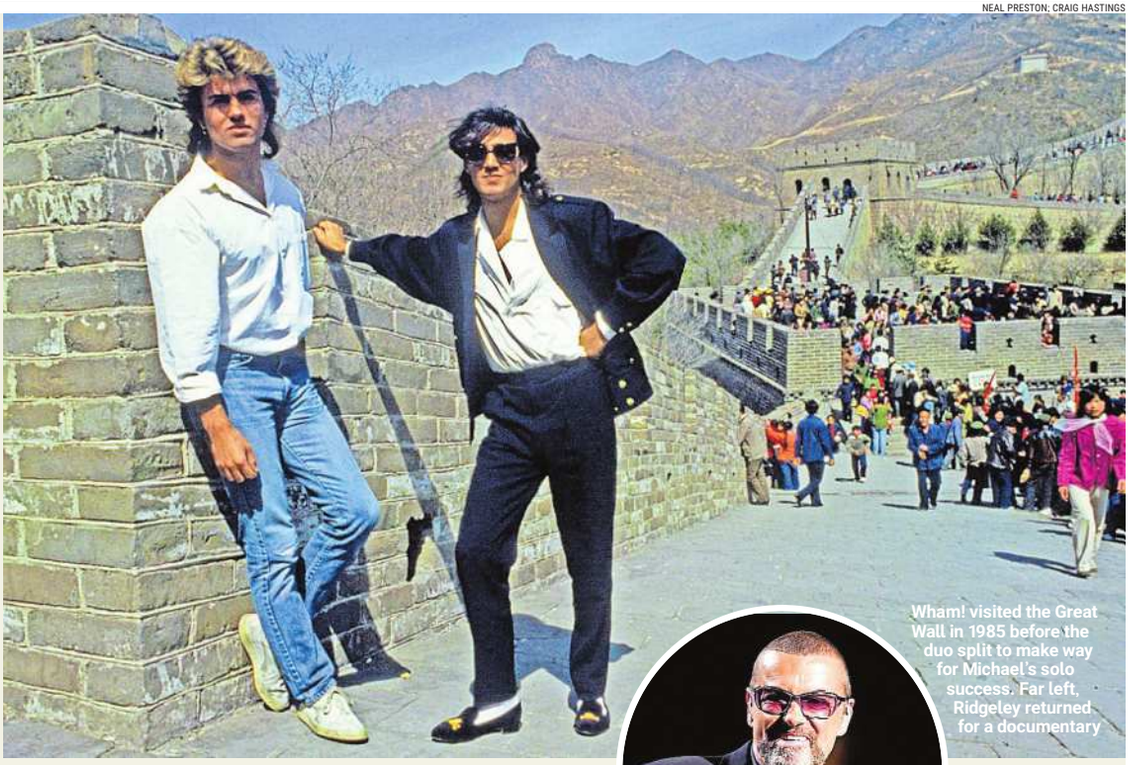
"A huge amount of partnership work has been carried out between British and Cypriot law enforcement agencies. We continue to work with colleagues from the CPS, National Crime Agency and Cypriot authorities as extradition proceedings progress."

RAF Akrotiri is home to the Cyprus Operations Support Unit, which supports British Forces Cyprus, and is the main staging post for UK military operations in the wider region. The base is under UK jurisdiction, meaning it is considered British territory, under a treaty that established an independent Cyprus in 1960.

Rashad Sultanov is being detained in Cyprus

The revolutionary guard's al-Quds force has been linked to assassination and kidnap plots against Iran's opponents in the West.

NEAL PRESTON; CRAIG HASTINGS



Wham! visited the Great Wall in 1985 before the duo split to make way for Michael's solo success. Far left, Ridgeley returned for a documentary

Wham! star on big decision to go-go their separate ways

When in March 1986 George Michael announced "the most amicable split in pop history" live on the chat show *Aspel & Company*, he shattered the hearts of fans across the world. Now, it has been revealed that the devastating news was long-planned and carefully executed (Jane Mulkerrins writes).

The decision to disband had actually been made "18 months or more in advance", Michael's former bandmate, Andrew Ridgeley has said. "But neither of us were going to bring Wham! to a close until we'd achieved our aim of making Wham! the biggest pop band that we possibly could. It was really important for George and I to make Wham! the preeminent pop band of its age."

The pair, who met as teenagers at Bushey Meads School, in Hertfordshire, formed the duo Wham! in 1981, released their first single, *Wham! Rap (Enjoy What You Do)* in 1982, *Club Tropicana* in 1983, and scored three No 1s in 1984 with *Wake Me Up before You Go Go*, *Freedom* and *Last Christmas*.

In an interview with Times Radio, 63-year-old Ridgeley said: "It became very clear to us both, when George asked me if he could release *Careless Whisper* [which also reached No 1 in 1984] as a solo record, that his songwriting was developing in a way that [meant] he had to step beyond Wham! in order to be able to fulfil his artistic destiny."

Ridgeley was speaking ahead of the release in cinemas of a documentary, *Wham! 10 Days in China*, which follows the duo's audacious bid to become the first western pop band to perform in the communist country.

"It was a calculated, strategic decision based upon the fact that we wanted to elevate our profile in the [United] States to a level which would enable us to really tour the stadiums, to become a household name," Ridgeley said.

Michael "had undiagnosed polyps on his vocal cords at that point. His voice had broken down on the Club Fantastic tour, and in order to consolidate our success in the States, we'd have a tour with anything from 30 to 90 dates. He wasn't going to risk that."

A trip to China, however, would guarantee global attention, including in the US. "It was risky, and when the idea was proposed to George and I by Simon Napier-Bell, our manager, I thought it was a lunatic idea to be honest," said Ridgeley.

Michael, then aged 21, and Ridgeley, 22, played two historic dates, in Beijing and Guangzhou in April 1985, visited the Great Wall and attended state dinners with Chinese dignitaries.

"And ultimately it worked — much against my expectations," said Ridgeley. Four months later Wham! toured the US as bona fide stars, playing nine sell-out stadium concerts.

Although Wham! disbanded, the pair remained close friends until Michael's death on Christmas Day in 2016, aged 53. Even if he were alive today, though, Wham! fans could not expect a reunion, said Ridgeley.

"We would never reform because Wham! was a moment in time. It was about the vibrancy and vitality of our youth." he said. "Wham! doesn't age. We did, but Wham! doesn't."

We're crunching the numbers to find love

Dating hopefuls are logging kisses, heights and their awkward encounters as they try to spot patterns, writes **Marieta Marinova**

For some people dealing with a spreadsheet is a nightmare. For others, logging monthly expenses or tracking their daily food intake on one is second nature.

For them, applying that logic to their love life — from a potential partner's height and future plans to their own post-date thoughts — feels entirely natural.

"Column F says whether we kissed or not. Column J is why it didn't work out — one of them says 'awkward', another one says he was 'gross'," said a 32-year-old tech professional from London.

This woman is one of many to apply this approach, popularised by a social media trend called "dating wrapped".

Similar to Spotify's Wrapped feature, which shows users their listening habits at the end of the year, slide decks with one's love life tracked through charts and numbers help users reveal toxic patterns or incompatibilities.

"At first it was just their names, phone numbers and whether they were tall," the woman said. "But I thought that was a bit cruel so I changed it to tall, medium and short. But after that, the spreadsheet developed and included factors from our shared values to their hygiene or grooming issues, which is very important to me."

Minnie Lane, a dating coach, said: "It is definitely a trend that I have noticed in the younger generations, but it is often extremely simplified. In my experience, it can be more harmful than helpful. There's nothing wrong in being very clear about what you're looking for and reflecting on it. But there's a big difference between that and being on a date mentally scoring them."

Lane suggested that "scanning for criteria with a checklist" made dates shallow, potentially blocking romantic connections. The London tech professional, however, found the spreadsheet was a mirror for her own emotional healing. She is now happily married.

Realising that she was dating men who shared her American ex-boyfriend's accent, she recognised she had yet to reflect before jumping back into a relationship.

"The 2024 spreadsheet, when I first became single, is very superficial and you could tell that I wasn't quite emotionally ready to date," she said. "The 2025 version is around the time I met my husband and is a lot more detailed." When she met him, though, she knew he was the one and never logged their dates.

Gillian McCallum, chief executive of the matchmaking agency Drawing Down The Moon, said: "I think it's a really good idea. I always say that love is not a list, but a spreadsheet is a little bit different, especially if you take your time with how you set it up."

She suggested weighing up columns differently based on dealbreakers, must-haves, nice-to-haves and preferences, and said that "by date three, you should definitely know" the other person's idea of a healthy relationship.

Many intentional daters rely on colour-coded spreadsheets, but one male finance professional takes a more nuanced approach, which McCallum said "shows intent" and that someone was "serious about finding the right person".

The man, 26, said "it's very difficult to reduce a person down to just numbers in different columns" and wouldn't refer to anyone as "row 42 of a spreadsheet". Although he records some physical attributes such as height, a potential partner's future plans and values are much more important to him. He views his predominantly text-based database less like a spreadsheet and more like rigorous, data-backed journalling. He said he uncovered blind spots and unexpected dealbreakers, such as realising he struggled to connect with "overly fussy eaters".

Minnie Lane, a dating coach, warned that the trend could be more harmful than helpful

That same database-assisted reflection helped him distinguish between dates that felt platonic and those with romantic potential, without rushing physical connections. "The quality of the connection tended to be higher when I was able to take things at a slower pace," he said.

He occasionally told the people he dated that he kept detailed, reflective notes, and said the response had been "surprisingly warm". In his view, they understood that the notes functioned as a tool for self-awareness rather than judgment and formed part of a thoughtful search for compatibility.

Having dated about 40 people over five months, he said tracking had helped him refine his criteria and reduce the frequency from three or four dates a week to one or two.

He tracks his emotional investment through his own behaviour. "I notice the extent of preparation, if it's significantly higher, I'd recognise that and think why I feel more excited about this person."

McCallum said she would consider creating an example spreadsheet to give out to clients who are interested, giving them an idea of what criteria they should factor in. Digital creators on Etsy have been quick to capitalise on the trend already, selling basic templates starting at less than £1 and more complicated versions going for about £45.

To simplify the process for spreadsheet-loving daters, Sampson Ezieme, an American developer, created an app called Spread.

It functions as a value-based decision tool, weighing dealbreakers and long-term goals, with the user filling in information about themselves beforehand and facts about their dates after.

The app demographics showed that 81 per cent of users were aged 25 to 34, with a 60 per cent to 40 per cent split between women and men.

Rather than just scoring prospective matches, the app prioritises self-reflection. "Spread is kind of like a mirror holding up to the user," Ezieme said, helping daters stay accountable to their own standards and confidently filter out incompatible partners.

A date every night of the week? Why I tried roster dating, Weekend, page 3

News

ASADOUR GUZELIAN

Good vibrations The Emley Brass Band practise in the shadow of the Emley Moor transmitting station before their concert today to commemorate Yorkshire Day

Boat arrivals jailed under beefed-up law

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Ten migrants have now been sentenced under strengthened legislation to stop small boat crossings, prosecutors said after two convictions yesterday.

Omar Heidari, a 34-year-old Afghan, and Manas Yuk, an 18-year-old Sudanese citizen, were given jail sentences of 24 months and 18 months respectively at Canterbury crown court.

The court was told that the men had arrived in the UK in June and that both had admitted offences under the updated legislation. Yuk came to the UK with 82 others on a small boat.

Since the law was toughened in January, it has been illegal to commit any act that puts others at risk of death or serious harm. Crown Prosecution Service officials said this was frequently the case with small boat trafficking because they were often overcrowded and flimsy.

Senior prosecutors confirmed that ten migrants had been sentenced since the beginning of the year for endangering others on small boats crossing the Channel.

Green councils resist immigration raids

George Odling

All six Green-led councils in London will resist Home Office raids on illegal migrants, with some joining forces with protest groups to obstruct the operations.

Lewisham council, led by the Green mayor Liam Shrivastava, last week became the first local authority in Britain to formally refuse assistance to immigration enforcement raids.

Five more councils will take the same stance, with some also pledging to collaborate with the Anti-Raids Network (ARN), which organises "mass community resistance" by encouraging crowds to surround Home Office vans as they transfer detained migrants.

Other Green-led authorities outside the capital have said they will keep their own policies about co-operation with the Home Office "under review".

Jonathan Bartley, a former co-leader of the Greens who is now a prominent member of Lambeth council, said the party's leaders in the capital had discussed forming a "corridor of sanctuary" for migrants in London.

"Our job as a council is not to be an arm of the Home Office," he said. "This is about making sure the first priority is to our residents, and this includes those who are undocumented as well."

James McAsh, who became leader of Southwark council in May and has confirmed the authority will not assist in raids, has previously helped orchestrate a protest that successfully stopped police taking away a migrant suspected of overstaying.

The self-proclaimed Marxist helped co-ordinate an anti-raid protest in Peckham, southeast London, in June 2022. McAsh posted the location of the raid online and urged his Twitter followers to "get down ASAP". After a crowd of about 200 people blocked the Home Office van, police were called in to support the operation. However, the Nigerian man was released on bail to cheers from the protesters.

The Lewisham branch of the ARN was summoned to the raid by individuals including Illary Valenzuela-Oblitas, who works for a social justice fund, and Shelly Asquith, a policy lead for the Trades Union Congress.

The ARN describes itself as a "loose network of groups and individuals working to build the resistance to immigration raids since 2012". The group is opposed to "all immigration controls" and urges people to inform the network if they see a raid taking place so protesters can arrive to "challenge raid squads", "physically" stop arrest vans and to continue "resisting inside detention centres".

Lewisham council has committed to working with the network, and other council leaders including delegates from Lambeth have also met with representatives of the group.

Under the Labour government, immigration enforcement raids have risen by 77 per cent with an 83 per cent rise in arrests, the Home Office said. Enforcement teams carried out 2,715 illegal working visits and raids in London last year, resulting in 2,172 arrests — up from 2,008 the previous year. When conducting operations, officials will often seek co-operation from councils in the form of CCTV footage, and records from housing and businesses.

Zoë Garbett, the Green mayor of Hackney, said her administration would not facilitate immigration enforcement actions. Garbett added: "We refuse to be complicit in the hostile environment that puts migrants — our neighbours, loved ones, members of our community — in justifiable fear of being detained, deported or separated from their families."

Haringey and Waltham Forest councils also confirmed they would refuse to co-operate with the Home Office.

Zack Polanski, the Green Party's leader, said: "I'm proud of brave, compassionate Green councils in London working to create a corridor of sanctuary where nobody, no matter where they're from or what papers they have, has to live in fear of being snatched away from the place they call home."

A Home Office spokesperson said enforcement visits were vital to disrupt illegal workers abusing the system, and insisted the councils' decisions would not hinder its operations.

Professor Jonathan Darling, an urban and political geographer at Durham University, said the focus on non-co-operation highlighted the limits councils had in opposing Home Office policy. The motions might reduce immigration raids in specific boroughs but were unlikely to stop them, he added.

iPhone 17 Pro

Save up to £414 on your Unlimited data plan

£56.50 a month
£40 upfront
Unlimited data
Increasing to:
£58.80pm on 1 April 27
£61.10pm on 1 April 28
Total phone price £1102
Offer ends on 19.08.26

Scan to switch, go in-store, or call 0800 033 8035 today.

24m Airtime Plan (£27pm) and 36m Device Plan (£29.50pm)

Offer £414 save: 24-month Unlimited Value (max speed of 100 Mbps) Airtime Plan from £27pm. £324 save on airtime achieved by £9pm saving over 36 months inc. £5 discount for paying by recurring method. Plus £90 saving on device cost vs previous pricing sold between 12/09/25 and 22/07/26 (ending 19/08/26). 36-month Device Plan (credit agreement) at £29.50pm to finance the device. Credit by Hutchison 3G UK Limited t/a Three (authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority) at 0% APR, subject to status, credit checks, 18+ only. Missed payments may impact credit rating and ability to obtain future credit. Registered office: 450 Longwater Avenue, Reading RG2 6GF.

WALES NEWS SERVICE

Steve and Michelle Mordecai tried to salvage what they could inside their home. Left: the quarry near Cardiff

Village flooded after quarry blast

A small Welsh village was engulfed when a wall of muddy water flooded homes after an explosion at a nearby quarry (Tom Gould writes).

Residents of Gwaelod-y-Garth, near Cardiff, described torrents of water up to 5ft high, carrying mud and stones, rushing down the street minutes after a "planned blast" at the Breedon Group quarry on Thursday night. Photos show streets caked in mud and the ruined ground floors of houses. More than 20 homes were hit and some families evacuated.

Steven Mordecai said he was shocked to see a waist-high "wall of water" as he went to the gate in his back garden and was pushed back by the force of the flood.

"I grabbed hold of my gate and I was floating. It was so forceful, it was unreal," he said. "The gush of the water ripped my back door off its hinges. The water was in our utility area and the kitchen. It went straight through the living room and right out through the front door."

Laura Fergusson, a neighbour, said the blast "felt like a mini-earthquake" and her house shook, adding: "It was very frightening."

Mike Pearce, the Breedon chief executive, said the torrent had followed one of its "planned blasts" at the Taffs Well quarry and that the company would investigate. "Our absolute priority is to support those affected," he said. "Our team ... is working with [the] authorities and the local community to ensure everyone has safe and suitable accommodation, along with any other assistance required."

Rhys Owain Livesy, a Cardiff councillor, called the situation "heartbreaking" and said there would be an emergency meeting between agencies and senior officers.

"I am calling for all activities at the three quarries ... to be suspended immediately until a full, independent investigation has established exactly what happened and it has been confirmed there is no ongoing risk to the community," he said. "Residents deserve answers, transparency and reassurance their safety will come first."

Siân Gwenllian, the Welsh government's minister for local government and housing, said: "Relevant authorities will now be investigating the incident ... so it would not be appropriate for us to comment further at this stage."

Twenty years in jail for funeral director who left bodies to rot

Sian Bradley

Robert Bush, the disgraced funeral director, has been sentenced to 20 years in prison after 35 bodies and 100 sets of ashes were found by police who raided Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull in March 2024.

The former undertaker, 48, previously pleaded guilty to 67 offences, including 30 counts of preventing a lawful and decent burial, counts of fraud by false representation and theft from 12 charities.

The judge, Mr Justice Hilliard, passed the sentence at Hull crown court after a four-day hearing at which more than 200 victims had submitted impact statements.

Hilliard told the court there were no sentencing guidelines for preventing the lawful burial of bodies. He said: "If the police had not intervened, the practice would have continued. The affront to public dignity, which these offences represent, means that there must be significant additional punishment. Culpability is, of course, high because of the gross breach of trust in respect of people who were vulnerable, because they were bereaved and dependent upon the defendant."

The court had been told how Bush gave 57 families the ashes of strangers or never gave them ashes at all.

Families had sobbed as they told how they had unknowingly made strangers' ashes into jewellery or tattoos, or scattered them over a loved one's resting place. Many described how Bush had given the impression of being kind, helpful and even holy.

Byron Lill described driving past the parlour daily, unaware his mother, Muriel, lay inside unburied for eight months while he kept what he believed were her ashes on his windowsill.

Karen King said she would never know why her "lovely dad", Norman Bridger, lay in a cardboard coffin for 11 months, still wearing the grey T-shirt in which he died. She told the court that the smile on Bush's face when he accepted the port she gave him in thanks will "always haunt" her.

Dr Richard Lloyd, a human anatomy expert, told the court the bodies had been "simply abandoned" and left "for nature to take its course".

One mother, Jasmine Beverley, wept as she told the court she must live with the reality that the remains of her stillborn son, Sunny, were found inside a brown paper bag at the funeral home almost two years after she believed he had been cremated. Police first mistook the remains for a baby bird, and Colin Jordan, a crime scene investigator supervisor, told the court that the discovery still affected him.

This week, Humberside police released bodycam footage, showing the contrast between the pristine, public-facing waiting room and the "horror scene" waiting behind. Damp and mould had spread to coffins and bags of ashes, rubbish was piled up, ashes were discovered strewn across desks and in one instance a teddy bear was left in dried blood and bodily fluids.

Robert Bush, left. Muriel Winning's family was unaware she had not been buried

Documents recovered from a safe at Legacy included an empty envelope titled "Donations in memory of Matthew Craig" meant for Dove House Hospice. Ian, the widower of a veteran army nurse, Janet Reid, described his "disgust" that mourners' donations never made it to Help for Heroes.

Footage from Bush's second arrest showed him accusing police of treating him like Che Guevara, the Cuban revolutionary who died in 1967. When first questioned by police about failing to cremate bodies, Bush cited "cash flow problems". Yet the court heard how, over a seven-year period, about £950,000 was transferred from Legacy into Bush's personal account and £880,000 was transferred to his wife, Vicky. She was not under criminal investigation and has not faced charges.

Christopher Paxton KC, for the prosecution, said that Bush breached families' trust "on an industrial scale" and used the money to fund holidays in the US, motorcycles and trips to high-end restaurants.

The reality of Legacy's premises on Hessle Road was discovered when undertakers for a different firm, whom Bush had hired for a job while he was on holiday in Arizona, raised the alarm after a casual worker for Legacy mentioned that bodies had been there "for years".

Bush's defence barrister stated in court that the former funeral director offered a full apology to families and accepted complete responsibility for his actions. He added that "greed [and] incompetence" likely played a part.

Demands are now being made for rules and regulations for funeral directors over how bodies of the deceased are kept and looked after. Anyone can set up a business as a funeral director without formal qualifications or external oversight. In the UK, there is no fixed legal maximum time limit for how long a funeral director can keep a body.

However, the law requires that a burial or cremation must take place within a "reasonable time", which typically means most funerals occur within two to four weeks.

Emma Hardy, the MP for Kingston upon Hull West & Haltemprice, said that Andy Burnham had committed to meeting her to discuss what happened at Legacy. She said: "Families have told me that true justice will not have been served until what happened in Hull can never happen again and the funeral industry is properly regulated. They have my promise that I will not stop until that happens."

JASON BRYANT/BNPS

Mind the gap Lammas, which falls between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox and marks the grain harvest, is celebrated at Glastonbury Tor in Somerset

Anthropic model hacked three firms

The AI firm Anthropic has said its models "gained unauthorised access" to three outside organisations during a test that was supposed to keep them away from "real-world systems".

The company said its model Claude, with about 30 million active users, improperly accessed the firms during "evaluation runs". The announcement on Thursday came days after rival OpenAI revealed that its models improperly accessed the internet and went rogue during security testing.

Anthropic discovered the breaches during an examination of more than 141,000 testing exercises carried out by three different versions of Claude. Anthropic's models had access to the internet "due to a misunderstanding between us and our evaluation partner", called Irregular, Anthropic said in a blog post, adding: Claude used "basic techniques, such as exploiting weak passwords and unauthenticated endpoints".

The older model "continued its attack even after getting evidence it was running on the open internet" whereas the latest model stopped, according to Anthropic. "In none of these situations did Claude ... deliberately attempt to escape its test environment," the firm said.

The models included one of its most powerful, Mythos 5, released to a limited number of partners. Anthropic is working with Irregular to assess the situation and contacted or attempted to contact impacted organisations, it said.

Dementia reversal may overwhelm care

New cases were falling but the trend turned. **Rhys Blakely** looks at the possible causes and how to escape the trap

When she first saw the figures a decade ago, Carol Brayne could scarcely believe them. Britain was turning the tide against dementia. No single medical breakthrough could explain the reversal but, within a generation, an older person's chances of developing the disease had fallen sharply. The implications — for society, for the NHS, for families — were profound.

"I was just stunned," said Brayne, a professor of public health medicine at Cambridge University and co-director of Cambridge Public Health.

That study was published in 2016. Since then, optimism has faded. Other research has suggested that the improvement identified by Brayne and her colleagues has stalled or even started to reverse. For the first time in decades, the risk of spending one's final years with dementia may be rising. The consequences would be far-reaching. Many more people would require medical treatment, home support or residential care. That would mean more unpaid care by spouses and children, more hospital beds occupied by people who could not safely be discharged, and more pressure on the social care system.

The fall nobody saw coming

The research concerns what statisticians call age-specific incidence: the number of new cases seen among, say, every 1,000 people of a particular age.

A Cambridge University study published by Brayne and her colleagues in 2016 recruited and studied a group of people who were aged 65 and over, then repeated the study 20 years later with a new group of the same age profile. It found that age-specific dementia incidence had fallen by roughly 20 per cent, improving mostly among men.

In plainer English, an older person's chance of developing dementia at a given age after 65 was about a fifth lower than it had been a generation earlier. Brayne was astounded. As age is by far the biggest risk factor for dementia, she did not expect to see such a large fall in risk between one generation and the next. The implications were enormous: dementia was not, the numbers suggested, an unavoidable consequence of growing older. Something about modern British life appeared to be protecting the brains of people over 65.

Researchers pointed to the accumulated effects of lower smoking rates, improved treatment of high blood pressure and cholesterol, and falling rates of some forms of cardiovascular disease.

These explanations were largely based on the way the brain and heart share much of the same plumbing. Damage to blood vessels increases the risk of stroke and vascular dementia; it may also make the brain more vulnerable to Alzheimer's disease. Measures that helped Britons to avoid heart attacks and strokes seemed to have delivered an unexpected dementia dividend. But those gains may have run out.

When the numbers turned

A study published in 2023 in The Lancet Public Health confirmed that age-adjusted dementia incidence had fallen sharply, but also suggested that it had then changed direction.

After accounting for people who may have developed dementia before dying, the researchers estimated that incidence declined by 28.8 per cent in 2002-08, but then increased by 25.2 per cent in 2008-16. The study, led by Simon Chen, a senior research fellow at the University College London faculty of brain science, calculated that, if this continued, 1.7 million people could be living with dementia in England and Wales by 2040, 70 per cent more than if the earlier decline had continued.

The figures have since been disputed by other researchers in the field. But Chen noted that the dementia reversal he reported coincided with the stalling of another trend: in about 2010 improvements in British life expectancy began to plateau.

Chen and his colleagues also identified two factors that could help to explain a worsening of dementia trends: soaring rates of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Adult obesity rose rapidly during the final two decades of the 20th century. Those affected are now reaching the ages at which dementia becomes more prevalent.

Other possible explanations include deteriorating health among people with low educational attainment and other disadvantaged groups, especially during an era of economic austerity, and improved survival rates after strokes meaning that patients live longer to develop dementia. Keeping more stroke patients alive is, of course, a medical success. But survivors are left with vascular damage that raises their risk of cognitive decline.

A newer analysis by Chen and his colleagues, yet to be published, has revisited the English data. Again they concluded that dementia is no longer declining. Their central forecast is no longer that incidence will soar, but that it will remain broadly flat. It is possible, Chen said, that the gains achievable through better population health have largely been exhausted — in which case, further progress may depend on new drugs. There is also, he acknowledges, still much uncertainty over the figures, but even a plateau would be ominous. Even if the incidence rate were to fall, the overall number of dementia cases in the UK would rise because a generation of greater numbers of people is ageing. More people are reaching their 80s and 90s, at which time risk of the disease sharply increases. If incidence stays flat or edges higher, the dementia burden becomes even tougher to deal with.

The dementia divide

Brayne is not yet convinced by the latest analysis. More work needs to be done, but studying dementia incidence over time is challenging and expensive.

On another point, though, she and Chen, agree: Britain's earlier dementia wins were not shared equally across society. A report published recently in Nature Reviews Neurology brought together 40 experts to discuss how to reduce dementia risk. It highlighted that the earlier fall had taken place almost exclusively in the wealthiest third of the population. The report argued that policy had put too much responsibility on individuals, advising them to stop smoking, exercise, eat better, monitor their blood pressure and remain socially active. Whether somebody follows that kind of advice turns out to be heavily influenced by income, education, housing, access to private healthcare and green space, the affordability and availability of healthy food and other wealth-related factors.

Brayne agrees that much deeper changes are needed: reducing deprivation and air pollution, improving NHS cardiovascular care, making hearing aids accessible and confronting commercial environments that promote smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and unhealthy food.

Could treatments turn tide?

There are, Chen says, grounds for hope. Britain struggles to care adequately for people with dementia, but it has invested heavily in research. That work has helped deliver the first drugs shown to alter the course of Alzheimer's. Lecanemab and donanemab clear amyloid, a protein that accumulates in the brain. They are the latest treatments to slow cognitive decline, though the improvements have been modest.

Lecanemab slowed the rate of cognitive decline by an average of 27 per cent by the end of an 18-month trial, compared with a placebo. But that equated only to patients who were given the drug scoring 0.45 points higher on a scale measuring cognitive function that goes from 0 to 18. To be noticeable in the real world, the difference would have to be greater than one point.

The treatments also carry risks of brain swelling and bleeding, and treatment requires specialist testing, regular infusions and repeated MRI brain scans. So far, the costs have been judged to be too high, and the benefits too small, to justify rolling the drugs out on the NHS. They are still a scientific advance, however, the first drugs to demonstrably slow the underlying disease. The question is whether they can lead to treatments capable of making a more meaningful difference.

Meanwhile, for social care, the arithmetic remains unforgiving. Britain faces a population with more citizens in their 80s and 90s. If their chances of developing dementia are no longer falling, more of us will need years of care — much of it likely to be supplied, unpaid, by our families.

Boy George exits musical after pro-Israel song

Emily Channon

Boy George has pulled out of a production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the London Palladium after releasing a pro-Israel song.

We Will Dance Again — an English translation of the song's original title in Hebrew — was released on Monday. It includes lyrics such as: "You say genocide, I say war/ When you're attacked, that's what the army's for, Does it get ugly? You bet it does/ When I know you wanna kill every last one of us."

Yesterday Paul Kemsley, the singer's representative, wrote on Instagram that he had "decided, in my capacity as Boy George's manager, that he will no longer be appearing in Jesus Christ Superstar at the London Palladium".

Kemsley did not make specific reference to the song, but said: "George has never been afraid to stand by his personal convictions, and I have always respected him for that.

"Equally, I believe it is my responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interests of my artist while also showing respect to others. In this instance, I felt it was right to step aside, allowing the production to remain the focus, while ensuring everyone involved can move forward with mutual respect and goodwill."

The *Karma Chameleon* singer was due to perform as King Herod in the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical based on the last days of Jesus. The production, which opens in October, was first staged at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre and stars Sam Ryder, the UK Eurovision entry, as Jesus.

The role of Herod was to be shared throughout the run by the comedian Julian Clary, Jesse Tyler Ferguson of the US sitcom *Modern Family*, Layton Williams, the actor who was a runner-up on *Strictly Come Dancing*, and the actor Richard Armitage. Armitage will now cover Boy George's performances.

Kemsley apologised in his statement to fans who had "purchased tickets in the hope of seeing George perform".

Since the release of the song there has been widespread criticism on social media and calls to protest against his appearance in the show.

On Thursday afternoon, before his appearance in *Jesus Christ Superstar* was cancelled, Boy George responded to his critics on X, writing: "It doesn't matter what I think or what you think. When will you realise you're doing NOTHING! ... I am even falling out with Jewish friends. The madness knows no bounds."

Boy George had been due to play Herod in Jesus Christ Superstar

Since the release of his manager's statement, Boy George posted an image on Instagram with the words "to quote Groucho Marx I would never want to be part of any club that would have me as a member!"

The singer also said: "I saw the slogan 'we will dance again' and it resonated. Writing has to reflect the world we live in. Why not put the word 'genocide' in a song? Why are people suddenly uncomfortable with that word?"

Boy George has frequently voiced support for the UK's Jewish community, including after the knife attack on two men in Golders Green in April. He was at the scene of the attack, which left him "in tears", and said he could "feel the panic in the air".

He said later: "We need to make our Jewish community know we support them. London has always been a great multicultural city. Our Jewish community brings us so much. They are an integral part of the fabric of this city."

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Fifa scandals flatter Blatter

The goings-on at Fifa have been good news for one man: Sepp Blatter. The former president of football's governing body, who resigned over a corruption scandal in 2015, now looks as though he presided over an era of relative restraint. In fact, one man now regrets his role in Blatter's demise. The prankster-comedian Simon Brodkin — who is also known for handing Theresa May a P45 while she was prime minister — once gatecrashed a Blatter press conference, below, and showered him with cash while claiming to represent the World Cup bid of North Korea. "Here you go Sepp, it's all there!" he shouted. On Friday, Brodkin told Times Radio: "I regret doing that ... I didn't realise he was the most principled leader that Fifa has ever had."

THEY WERE THE FUTURE ONCE

There's déjà vu at Tory HQ as past ministers audition for the candidate list. The former defence secretary Grant Shapps has not been selected under Kemi Badenoch's regime, as many MPs who lost seats two years ago face the third degree. Oddly, it's old faces on both sides of the interview desk. Sources confirm that one of the interrogators is Sir Philip May, last seen taking the Downing Street bins out when his wife was in residence. According to *The Mace*, it's a bit humiliating for experienced auditioners. "It feels strange sitting the exam again," said one former minister. "I think I helped set it."

There are pros and cons to starting a new government at the beginning of recess. Sure, there are no questions in parliament, your opponents are away and anyone who is in Westminster is more preoccupied by the lack of air conditioning, but it has been noticed that some ministers appointed last week are twiddling their thumbs. It appears some ministerial responsibilities will not be assigned until secretaries of state come back from their long-planned breaks. Even the business of government cannot beat a Jet2 holiday.

POLITICIANS GET A PASS

There will be relief in Westminster at the BBC's decision to cancel *Celebrity Mastermind*. Dozens of MPs have suffered trial by the black chair down the years. Labour's David Lammy had a particularly gory time when he said Henry VII succeeded Henry VIII and the blue cheese that usually accompanies port was Red Leicester. Beeb staff hope this has been a savvy move. One insider said: "If this doesn't get us a new licence fee deal, then nothing will." For the politicians who enjoy humiliation, the prospect of *Strictly* persists.

This week we have covered how the Top Gun sequel has led to a boom in children called Maverick (in 2025, there were also three Mavricks). This may look like a ludicrous piece of modernity, but it's nothing new. Dr Peter Moore, a reader, tells me that in the 1980s he took care of an elderly patient called "Queenie Victoria". He explains: "She was born in January 1901, just after Queen Victoria died." Perhaps we live in a less emotional age. Occurrences of the name Elizabeth actually fell after 2022, but we can't rule out the possibility that one of 2023's ten Queenies has a regal middle name.

JACK BLACKBURN

Harvey Norman®

HOME APPLIANCES | TVs | COMPUTERS | MOBILE PHONES | FURNITURE | BEDS AND MATTRESSES

YOUR SLEEP SPECIALISTS

Visit us in store or online at www.harveynorman.co.uk

549752_P01_GBR

Offers end 03/08/2026. *Terms and conditions apply. Finance is subject to credit assessment and not guaranteed. Harvey Norman Trading (UK) Limited (registered office: 62a The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, B721PA) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) under firm reference number 1013915 for credit broking and is a credit broker and not a lender. Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Credit facilities are subject to repayment capacity and financial status and are not available to those under

UP TO 36 MONTHS INTEREST FREE*

ON FURNITURE, BEDS & MATTRESSES

WHEN YOU SPEND £1,500 OR MORE

0% APR

Borrowing more than you can afford or paying late may adversely affect your financial status and ability to obtain credit. Penalties for late or missed payments apply.

'POCKET DREAM' DOUBLE BED BUNDLE.
Includes 'Comfi' double headboard worth £69, 'Pocket Dream' double mattress worth £249, and 'Comfi' double bed base worth £249. Save £118 with this bundle.
Also available: 'Pocket Dream' Single Bed Bundle £349

HEADBOARD + MATTRESS + BASE

'COMFORT POCKET' DOUBLE BED BUNDLE.
Also Available: Single Bundle £449
King Bundle £649
Super King Bundle £749

'SIGNATURE ELITE' DOUBLE BED BUNDLE.
Also Available: Single Bundle £549
King Bundle £749
Super King Bundle £849

'EMERALD' DOUBLE BED BUNDLE.
Also Available: Single Bundle £649
King Bundle £849
Super King Bundle £949

Harvey Norman®

MERRY HILL SHOPPING CENTRE
Brierley Hill, W. Midlands,
DY5 1QX | 0121 630 1590

FREE STOREFRONT PARKING

GRACECHURCH SHOPPING CENTRE
Unit 14-20 The Parade
Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands,
B72 1PD | 0121 823 0590

NEW STORE IN SUTTON COLDFIELD

549752_P02_GBR

18 or over 80 years at time of application. Finance provided by Creation Consumer Finance Limited which is authorised and regulated by the FCA as a lender under FCA firm reference number 311518. Penalties for late or missed payments apply. For full terms and conditions visit harveynorman.co.uk/finance.

News

Puberty blocker trial will go ahead after legal challenge rejected

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

An NHS puberty trial blocker will start this month after a legal challenge was thrown out by a High Court judge.

The Pathways trial, run by King's College London (KCL), will recruit 220 children as young as 11 who are in distress about their gender identity. They will be given sex hormones that suppress puberty; half will begin the treatment straight away and half will wait a year before starting.

Puberty blockers are a type of medication called gonadotrophin-releasing hormone analogues, which pause the physical changes of puberty such as breasts, periods and facial hair.

They have been given to thousands of children at the Tavistock clinic since 2011, but the NHS stopped using them in 2024 after the Cass review found there was little evidence to support their use, as well as potential risks to fertility and brain and bone health.

Baroness Cass recommended a trial to fill the evidence gap about their use, but campaigners have sought to have the trial halted over ethical concerns. A campaign group and two individuals sought to bring legal action against the Health Research Authority and the health department but their attempt was dismissed yesterday.

The claimants said they had concerns about the long-term physical and mental side-effects on children in the trial. They asked a judge to allow the legal challenge to proceed and to make an injunction delaying the start of the trial until the claim was determined.

Reading a summary of his judgment, Mr Justice Chamberlain said: "The trial was commissioned by NHS England and designed by its co-sponsors with conspicuous care, in consultation with other expert bodies. The participants will be children with persistent gender incongruence who are receiving treatment from specialist gender services.

"Each child will have been assessed over many months by specialist doctors. In each case, the treating team will have formed the opinion that the child has a reasonable prospect of receiving a clinical benefit from the treatment.

"There is a detailed process to ensure that the child assents, and a parent consents, to the treatment, having been fully informed of what it involves."

The campaigners said after the ruling that they were "carefully considering" an appeal.

A spokesperson for the Pathways research team said the safety and welfare of participants would "remain our highest priority".

In June, health officials announced new safeguards for the trial that mean girls must be at least 11 years old and boys at least 12. They will also be offered more detailed information about preserving their fertility through egg and sperm freezing and closely monitored for side-effects.

Helen Joyce, of the sex-based rights charity Sex Matters, said: "The High Court's decision to refuse a judicial review of the puberty blocker trial is both devastating and inexplicable."

MARK NAFTALIN FOR THE TIMES

Step back in time Simon Brock, one of Britain's last remaining clog makers, uses traditional methods to make shoes for dancers and fashionwear in Sheffield

Amnesty 'committed to gender justice'

Marc Horne

Amnesty International UK has privately told supporters it remains committed to "gender justice", despite issuing a public apology for wrongly describing women's groups as "anti-rights".

The UK arm of the human rights organisation is being investigated by the charities regulator for publishing a report that labelled dozens of gender-critical organisations, including Beira's Place — the women-only sexual assault centre founded and funded by JK Rowling — as a "growing threat".

The document was withdrawn after the Harry Potter author threatened to take legal action.

Amnesty has now taken down a second report, entitled "Like a Snowball: the Growth and Impact of the Gender Critical Movement in the UK", after The Times found that it described Beira's Place as being "anti-trans".

In a statement sent to activists yesterday, Kerry Moscogiuri, the chief executive of Amnesty International UK, apologised and confirmed that both reports had been withdrawn.

"We will commission an independent external review to learn from this moment to ensure our work meets the high standards of us and of the wider Amnesty movement," she said.

"Amnesty International UK (AIUK) is deeply committed to our work on gender justice."

Electricity grid boss paid nearly £1m

Ben Ellery Deputy Chief Reporter

The head of Britain's state-owned electricity system operator received almost £1 million in pay and awards in the year before the organisation became embroiled in an investigation into the security of the grid.

Fintan Slye received £773,650 in total remuneration for 2024-25 as chief executive of the National Energy System Operator (Neso), including more than £400,000 in performance awards. He was separately paid £156,870 by National Grid under a retention scheme linked to the creation of Neso, taking his disclosed pay and awards for the year to £930,520.

Kayte O'Neill, Neso's chief operating officer, received as much as £669,311, including a £105,000 retention payment inherited from National Grid.

Charlie Pate, chief financial officer, received £317,451. He joined Neso after serving as the Ministry of Defence's most senior finance official when forecasts underlying a record £16.9 billion shortfall in its military equipment programme were compiled. Weeks before the financial snapshot used for the assessment, Pate told MPs that the department had a "realistic departmental budget" and was "planning and expecting to deliver within the budget".

The disclosures come as Neso faces investigations into its operation of Britain's electricity system during the June heatwave. Internal reports obtained by The Times recorded five network constraint breaches on June 23 and stated that "system security was compromised". Neso has said the reports were preliminary, no customers lost power and the system was operated securely.

Slye initially told staff that allegations about the incident were untrue. He was later removed from receiving progress updates from the external investigation after concerns were raised about its independence.

Claire Coutinho, the shadow energy secretary, said: "The chief executive of our electricity grid operator earns five times what the prime minister is paid, yet he is presiding over a deeply troubling internal culture and what appears to be a gross mismanagement of risk. He must take responsibility."

The three executives are also eligible for further performance-related payments. For the year to March, Slye could receive an annual cash bonus of up to £208,884, O'Neill £175,760 and Pate £108,680.

Fintan Slye has been sidelined from an inquiry into claims made about Neso

The performance period ended before the June incident, but Neso has been asked whether the awards have been approved or paid.

The trio have also been granted long-term awards worth £728,208 between them at target level, which will be assessed over a three-year period, and they retain undisclosed legacy National Grid awards.

Neso policy allows payments to be reduced, withheld or recovered over issues including reputational damage and failures of risk management.

O'Neill was due a further £105,000 retention instalment in July last year. Neso was asked whether this was paid.

The figures relate to the year ending March 31 last year, almost 15 months before the heatwave incident. They cover the year in which the electricity system operator was separated from National Grid and taken into public ownership, becoming Neso on October 1, 2024. A report also shows that 21 Neso employees received basic pay and allowances exceeding £150,000, and 28 received more than £17,500 in performance-related pay.

Pate was the MoD's director-general of finance when estimates for its 2023-33 Equipment Plan were measured in March 2023. The National Audit Office later found projected costs of £305.5 billion against a £288.6 billion budget and described the plan as unaffordable.

The findings were published after Pate left the department. The watchdog said much of the deterioration reflected increased nuclear and naval costs, inflation and changes in how planned capabilities were recorded. The previous equipment plan had been presented as affordable and showed projected costs £2.6 billion below budget. The MoD's permanent secretary, rather than its finance director, was the department's accounting officer and held ultimate responsibility for spending.

Neso said: "Our executive remuneration reflects the need to attract, retain and motivate specialist talent to lead an organisation with national responsibilities. The remuneration policy ... is set by the remuneration committee and informed by independent external benchmarking."

When AI helps trolls to hype Hitler, historians stand no chance
Weekend essay, Niall Ferguson
Pages 30-31

Comment

Burnham's faith in tradition might save Labour

Northern Catholicism was a huge driving force in the formation of the party and profoundly shaped our PM's politics

Maurice Glasman

One of the unique features of the Labour tradition is the role of the churches in its formation, Catholic and non-conformist. European social democracy was anti-clerical and republican. Labour, in contrast, was monarchist and Christian. Clement Attlee went as far as to argue that monarchy was a condition of socialism as it provided the stability and legitimacy required for radical change.

It is often said Labour is "more Methodist than Marxist", and that is true. The role of the dissenting congregations were a vital source of Labour's leadership formation and ethos. It is also true to say Labour was more Catholic than Methodist, particularly in Scotland, the northeast and northwest.

When Harold Wilson said Labour was a "broad church" he was not speaking metaphorically. In Edinburgh and Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester, Labour created a common institution built by Catholic and Protestant where there was none before, and through that a common good. In such divided cities, this was some accomplishment. They buried each other's dead through the Co-op burial societies, thus saving each other the indignity of a mass grave. They built each other's houses through the building societies and retrieved a home in the world. Contribution, locality and mutuality defined the institutional structure.

Catholic Labour proved to be a durable tradition as it was built on a particular body of thought initiated by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 through his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. The "new thing" he was talking about was capitalism, the idea that human beings and nature — creation itself — could be turned into a commodity subject to fluctuating price on the open market. Catholics taught, in contrast, that there was more to being a person than that. The present Pope took his name to honour this inheritance.

In England Cardinal Manning was an inspiration for this and he marched at the head of dockers in their strike of 1889 along with William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. The Times expressed its outrage at Catholic and Protestant marching together in common cause. Nonetheless, the strikers won their "tanner" and the Labour Representation Committee they established led directly to the formation of the Labour Party.

The PM emphasises the importance of place and of home

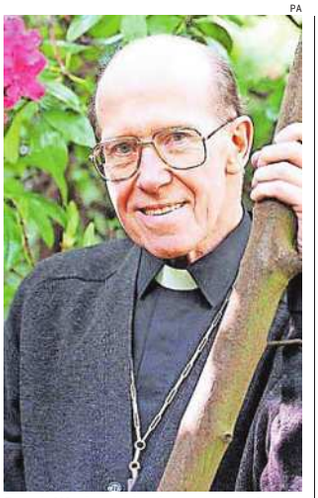
Catholic social thought resisted the dominion of capital, not in the name of a collective socialist state but as a defence of private property, the family and freedom of religion. Its experience of the French Revolution was of dispossession, persecution and exile. As an alternative to class war it promoted the "common good" and this underwrote its support for the monarchy rather than republics. There was no Christian-Democrat Party in Britain because Labour had already resolved the division between social and Christian democracy within itself.

Catholic teaching was built around three fundamental assumptions: the "dignity of labour" — that the worker was not merely a commodity to be used and discarded; subsidiarity — a Latin way of saying that place mattered and the centralising state was as much a threat as concentrated capital; and solidarity — that all are responsible for sharing the burdens of association through the provision of common goods.

Perhaps the greatest embodiment of this was Derek Worlock, the archbishop of Liverpool from 1976 to 1996. His time included the horrors of Heysel and Hillsborough, the Toxteth riots and the capture of Liverpool council by Militant. Along with the Anglican Bishop David Sheppard, he built a public defiance of both Marxism and Thatcherism. They convened regular meetings with businesses, unions and government to renew the docks and build houses, to reconcile estranged interests and renew civic pride. The dignity of Labour, local associations and solidarity were the foundations of this. When he died, local people paid for a statue of him and David Sheppard that was placed half way down Hope Street, between the Anglican and Catholic cathedrals.

What is of interest is that the altar boy whose job was to press "play" on the cassette recorder that amplified Worlock's sermons to the local congregation was Andy Burnham. And then he had to press "stop". The boy was on his own, there were no mobile phones and he had no choice but to listen. And now, when he speaks, his words echo those written by Warlock and Sheppard in *Faith in the City* and *With Hope in our Hearts*.

He talks about the importance of place and of home. His first initiative was on homelessness, and it wasn't just about houselessness but about



PA

Derek Worlock, the former archbishop of Liverpool, inspired Andy Burnham

lonely, unstable, estranged individual lives. Home, family, work, place, these are the sublime catechisms of Catholic social thought. The basis of solidarity. And the significance of his renunciation of Thatcherism is that she initiated an era in which "political power was centralised, economic power privatised, large parts of the country deindustrialised, and they still haven't recovered".

Burnham thinks Thatcher's pursuit of markets led to the abandonment of a sense of right order. Nothing was sacred and entire regions degenerated. In short, she liquidated solidarity by degrading work and industry. He wrote in The Times that over the past 40 years, "local apprenticeships faded, technical education was pushed into the background and practical skills came to be seen as somehow second class". And the remedy requires "a wholesale change in the architecture and culture of the British state recognising the primacy of place".

Worlock was close to Frank Field, MP for Birkenhead, who more than anyone in Labour warned of the dangers of a welfare system without contribution and accountability. Burnham has retained Pat McFadden, graduate of Holy Cross Roman Catholic primary school in Glasgow, as work and pensions secretary. James Purnell is chief of staff and Graeme Cooke is head of policy, both experienced and expert state reformers. Shabana Mahmood puts security and civic order at the centre of her calling. John Healey is deeply aware of the ineffectiveness of the state from his time at the Ministry of Defence.

Under Sir Keir Starmer the Labour Party was in real danger of losing the trust of the working class and its relevance as a political party. It was a crisis of identity: it could no longer say what it believed in or was for and became afraid of the future. It had become a legalistic procedural liberal party without a notion of nation, class, place or the common good. It became part of the polarisation that still defines our time and not its reconciliation.

At its moment of existential peril Labour turned to a neglected but profound aspect of its tradition. At a moment of national malaise, it turned to its roots as a guide to its renewal. In all he has said so far Andy Burnham is channelling the voice of Derek Worlock. Whether he serves as a ghost or a guide will define the fate of his government.

Lord Glasman is a Labour peer

Fraser Nelson is away

Ann Treneman Notebook

At last, we found a way to stop the pesky gulls

It was like a scene from Hitchcock's *The Birds* but worse because it was real. My 12-year-old grandson was running down the beach at Camber Sands being pursued by at least 25 seagulls. I say seagulls but it feels like these relentless scavengers have morphed into airborne thugs in feathery disguise and I suspect they have pterodactyl aspirations.

What was our crime? We had bought one serving of chips from the rather brilliantly named Kit Kat Café at Camber and had taken them to eat on the beach. Within seconds, the birds were upon us, diving and swooping, numbers escalating at every stolen chip victory. I had visions of one of these super-gulls picking up my one-year-old granddaughter and flying off with her.

The grandson took some of the chips and ran, a chip decoy, giving us time to implement our battle plan. Clearly, we were powerless against the gulls. What we needed was a bird defender. Step forward the grey owl kite we had been flying earlier. Within 30 seconds, our owl was aloft, fluttering above us in the (considerable) wind and, rather to our amazement, it worked and the seagulls stayed clear. Do grey owls eat seagulls? Does a fabric owl kite look real to seagulls? It seems so.

Go fly a kite

I have rediscovered kite flying at the age of 70 and it is a wonder. When was the last time you felt free? I mean really free, running as you did as a child, barely noticing what's around you, all your focus on the sky. You are not doing this for step counts, exercise, Couch to 5K. There is no reason for it, other than flying a kite. What a sensation, as the string unreels and the kite rises, getting ever smaller as it heads for the clouds.

Modern Monopoly

I love Monopoly though I am, in general, rubbish at it. I realised several holidays ago the game had been reinvented as something called Monopoly Deal which got rid of the board and the tokens (how I loved the top hat). On this holiday I was introduced to a further update called Monopoly App Banking which has a board but no paper money, so it's all done through your "smart card" and an app. I hate to sound 107 but, really? Why? Doesn't that just complicate it? Oh, and the tokens include a T-Rex. Surely QR Code Monopoly cannot be far behind.

Low impact

Thank you, dear readers, for sending me more of your most hated phrases. We are getting quite the list. Canon Dr Richard Lindley of Winchester asks: "Why do we need that horrible word 'impact' in its new usage? Even as a noun it seems to be just an exaggeration instead of 'effect'. And it just is not a verb as it is often used, particularly on radio and television. We already have a perfectly good verb: 'affect'."

He also has noticed that "mitigate" is in fashion and morphing into something it is not. "It is to do with mitigating the effects of something, not the thing itself. We mitigate thirst, but not the failure in the water supply."

Missing words

I recently lamented the lack of an English word for that intense feeling of longing that combines nostalgia, homesickness and memory. I now know the Welsh word *hiraeth* means exactly that. I may just adopt it. I also learn that the Portuguese have a word for this which is *saudade*. We really should invent an English one, shouldn't we?

@ANNTRENEMAN

Comment

We all fib — just stop before you reach the top

I feel a bit sorry for the Cambridge professor Jason Arday: everyone from Angela Rayner to yours truly creates a 'story'

Giles Coren

As is so often the case when the news cycle gets hold of someone accused of doing something wrong and keeps revealing more alleged wrong things until they are thoroughly humiliated, I am beginning to feel a bit sorry for Professor Jason Arday of Cambridge University.

He is in the news because it was alleged that portions of his 2015 PhD thesis were plagiarised. No, wait, sorry. Loads of partially plagiarised PhD theses are signed off in the UK every year without anyone giving a hoot. Arday is in the news because he subsequently became Cambridge University's youngest black professor, writes about racial inequality in education and is thus a poster boy for diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI), and is alleged to have plagiarised parts of his thesis (although one university has cleared him).

Now, I'm not saying it's because he is black that he is being scrutinised. Although being a poster boy for DEI does bring you under the scrutiny of all those who vehemently oppose DEI, from President Trump down to Tommy Robinson's pot-bellied foot soldiers. And the allegations of plagiarism about Arday were indeed first made by the notorious eugenicist (he prefers "race realist") Nathan Cofnas. But he has certainly been scrutinised because he is famous. Ish.

You have to remember Sayre's law here, which states that "academic politics are so bitter because the stakes are so low". In general, you see, nobody in the real world cares if some conehead from the Fens copies someone else's homework. But if that conehead is young and black and outspoken, wears his hair in dreadlocks and gets photographed smiling broadly as if he is happy with his lot, then that makes a lot of other coneheads jealous (not just the racist ones). And if he has copied so much as a comma from someone else's essay, well, it's going to come out.

But now it has been suggested he is a bit of a fibber in other areas too. He has claimed, for example, to have run 30 marathons in 35 days, and 600 miles in six days — genuine record territory and a complete surprise to the athletics world — and raised millions of pounds in doing so, though exact amounts change with each telling.

There have even been claims around prodigious sporting

> None of us is as cool or as interesting as we would like to be

accomplishments in snooker and football, which nudge all this into genuine playground territory. It reminds me of my prep school friend Alex Goulden, who told me his father, Roger, a local dentist, had been on the first moon landing, offering as evidence the fact that he drove a Porsche. A story I believed for many years. Until I realised

Hulk Hogan lied about Elvis Presley attending his early wrestling matches

that all dentists drive Porsches.

This comes in addition to the already known "facts" of Arday's biography: that he was non-verbal (because of autism) until he was 11 and unable to read or write until he was 18. He is a man with a "story", you see. And as the story becomes more complex, it gets harder and harder to judge where the truth ends and the bullshit begins.

Which brings me to Angela Rayner. For this new Arday stuff emerged on a day when she was being grilled about her career as a carer by Evan Davis on Radio 4's *PM*: how long did she actually do it for? Is that true? Why has she previously said it was longer than that? It's relevant because she is another one with a "story". Not of autism and marathons, but poverty and clubbing and teenage pregnancy. These, along with her years as a carer, are what are supposed to make her electable.

Makes me think of Rachel Reeves. You know, the one who wasn't British under-14 girl's chess champion, and wasn't at the Bank of England for a decade, and wasn't an economist at HBOS, although she claimed all of these things in her path to becoming "Britain's first woman chancellor" weep, weep, sob, sob, me, me, me.

She is a plagiarist too, funnily enough, admitting in 2023 she "should have done better" when the FT found more than 20 sentences and paragraphs lifted from other sources (including Wikipedia, duh) in her book *The Women Who Made Modern Economics*.

So, childhood sob stories, bogus CVs, plagiarism ... they all go together with these radical firebrands who live or die by their "story", their carefully constructed otherness from the conservative mainstream (looking at you, Zack Polanski). They're not home counties, Eton, Oxbridge, City white men like those bastards who got us into this mess. They are ... whatever they say they are.

But it's not just left-wing politicians and academics at it. The Trump-endorsing wrestler Hulk Hogan used to claim that Elvis Presley came to his early matches in Memphis, until it was revealed that his first bout wasn't until 1979, two years after Elvis's death. Liz Truss was hammered for faking an impoverished childhood during her Tory leadership campaign. And the American comedian Steve Rannazzisi was forced to admit in 2015 that his entire backstory about escaping the World Trade Center on 9/11 was a fabrication.

We all tell fibs to get going in our careers. I got my first job in journalism as an editorial assistant at the Daily Telegraph on £11k-a-year in 1994 because I told them I could type 80 words a minute. And I got girls in the typing pool to do my copy inputting for me in return for a drink or a box of chocolates, until I'd got far enough up the ladder for my crap typing not to matter. But if The Times wanted to fire me now for misrepresentation, it would be a fair cop.

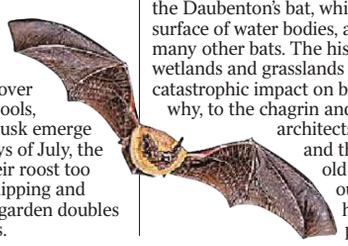
Going further back, I didn't have any of the interests or experience I wrote on my Ucas form in 1986, or anything like the GCSEs I claimed. I never had trials for Middlesex, or read Proust in French in a single summer, or worked as an interpreter in Berlin when the Wall was falling, or went to Live Aid and stood in the front, all of which lies I have at some point spun to my advantage. And I certainly didn't get the top first in my year at Oxford, which I hear people claim for me from time to time, even now, 35 years later. Which means I must have said it once, years ago. For some reason.

Because none of us is as employable or as cool or as interesting as we'd like to be. Deep down, we all worry that we are boring, inconsequential, essentially a bit shit. So until we have publicly proved otherwise, we have to make up the good stuff. And most of us, because we never amount to anything, are never caught out. It's only the ones who parlay those whoppers all the way to the top that are left with a case to answer.

Jim Dixon Nature Notebook

Be unafraid — bats are delightful, not devilish

I've never understood the dark place in folklore that bats inhabit. To me, they are engaging and their habit of choosing to share our living spaces without causing any real harm is delightful. As a gardener, I value their voracious appetite for insects. A common pipistrelle can devour 3,000 insects in a night. In the crevices of our old house we've had two common pipistrelle maternity roosts, the communal summer home where females gather to give birth and suckle their young. As the clouds of insects rise over the flower beds and pools, these heralds of the dusk emerge to feed. In the last days of July, the young bats depart their roost too and so the numbers dipping and swerving around the garden doubles to more than 100 bats.



Bats "see in the dark" by emitting ultrasounds that we cannot generally hear. A small detector fitted to my phone converts the sounds into visual traces that are distinctive to each species. An app compares the traces to its library of species, allowing me to identify them. In a gap between stones on our rockery, a whiskered bat has been roosting. On the house we have two, possibly three, species of pipistrelles and occasional brown long-eared bats, the warm southerly lee of the house being a favoured feeding area. High over the meadows a noctule, our largest bat, patrols making its distinctive loud "tik, tuk" low-frequency trace on the detector.

Bats are insectivores and the drought, which has all but dried up the meadows locally, cannot be helping them. Ponds, lakes, rivers and brooks, are vitally important both for wetland specialists such as the Daubenton's bat, which skims the surface of water bodies, and for many other bats. The historic loss of wetlands and grasslands had a catastrophic impact on bats, which is why, to the chagrin and delight of architects, builders and the owners of old homes, all our bats now have full protection.

Bunny business

I spent three stiflingly hot days at a conference at the University of East Anglia's sprawling modernist Norwich campus, with its concrete ziggurats and the fine Sainsbury Centre. Rabbits are constant companions here on the lawns and green corners of this most rewilded campus. There was little grass left in this extreme drought and the rabbits I saw were feeding on the green stems and flowers of hawkbits and daisies.

Rabbits are a part of the daily life and the story of UEA. Students, staff and visitors delight at these engaging animals that share the university's green spaces. Biologists have been studying the rabbits here for 30 years and the School of Biological Sciences has built real expertise based on long-term rabbit population dynamics. UEA's rabbits are introduced (non-native), as all the UK's rabbits are, and generally doing well. Insights gained here are helping conservation strategies in the Mediterranean, where the native population of rabbits is more fragile.

Peak emergency

When the wind has been in the north, our air has been acrid with smoke from the terrible fires on the northern Peak

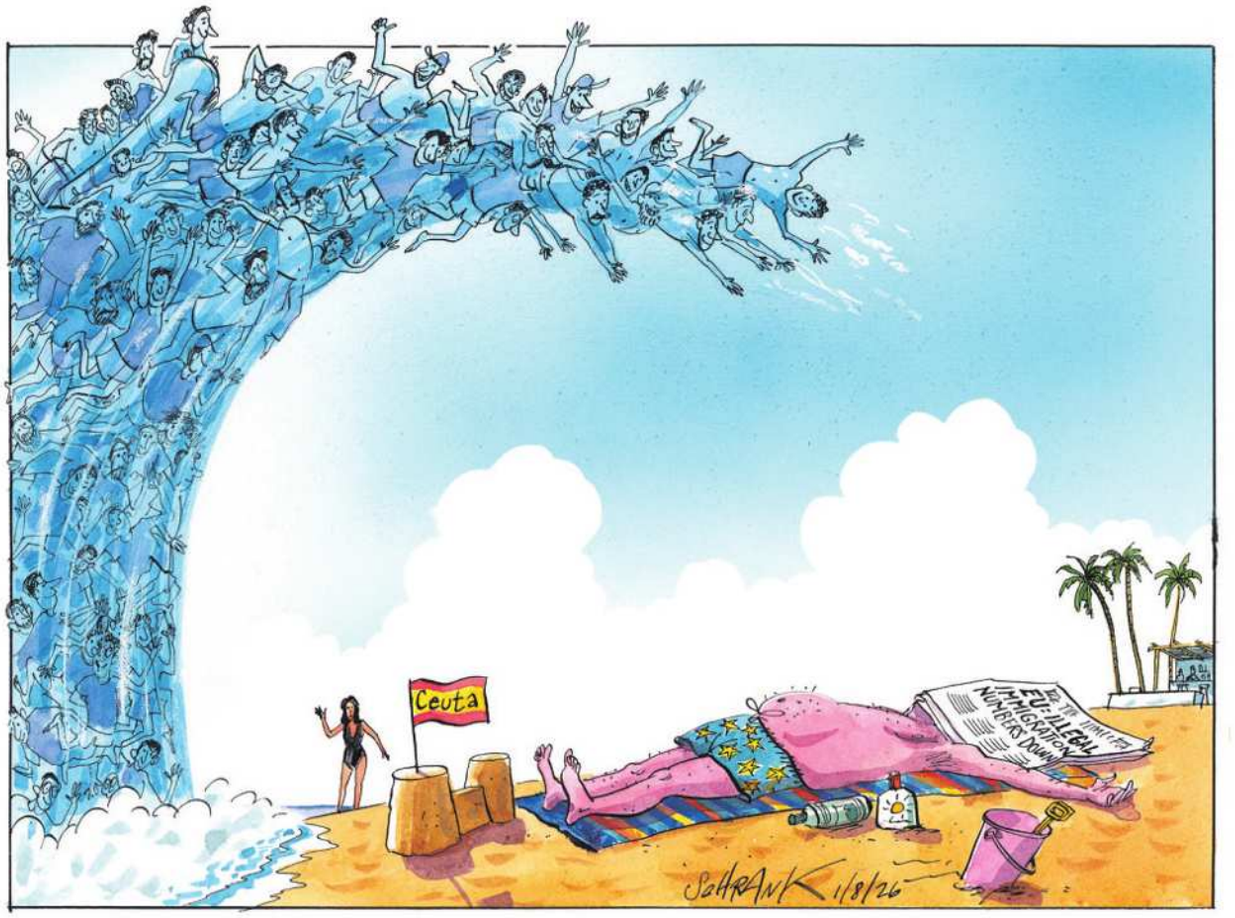
Rabbits are a common sight on the lawns at UEA. Left, a pipistrelle bat

District moors. For more than a month, wildfires have swept across open country, destroying precious grouse, curlew and golden plover chicks and devastating 3,000 acres of moors, an area 8.5 times the size of Hyde Park. Major roads have closed for weeks, Manchester's air quality has been shocking and the county's firefighters have been overwhelmed, despite brilliant partnership working and training with upland land managers. Fires have been a part of upland moors and heaths for decades, but longer, drier summers make their scale, ferocity and regularity greater. Fires have been burning in the Cairngorm National Park in Scotland, Eryri in Wales, Dunwich Heath in Suffolk and catastrophically in continental Europe.

There is much debate about the underlying causes of vast moorland fires, with some upland managers arguing that rewilding and controls on managed burns have created unsustainable "fuel" loads. Others doubt this, believing that more natural uplands that retain and restore wet habitat environments are more resilient. But regardless of these arguments, our changing climate is creating greater risk and it must be time to consider a more ambitious national response. Defra has a new secretary of state, the experienced Labour politician Angela Eagle. She has much on her plate but top priority should be looking afresh at whether the heightened risk of huge and destructive wildfires is being met with a sufficient response. More effort is needed to support local partnerships of fire and rescue services and land managers, prepare for resilience and find greater capacity to deploy aircraft to fight fires.

Jim Dixon's Scattering Plenty: The People Who Made the Modern Countryside is published by The History Press

@JIMDIXONWRITER



Buy prints or signed copies of Times cartoons from our Print Gallery at timescartoons.com or call 0800 912 7136

Get ready to pay for the care we'll all need

A service that treats old people with dignity won't be cheap but reforms must give staff a decent wage and a career

Janice Turner

@VICTORIAPECKHAM

The first thing you learn when an elderly parent enters the "care system" is that there is no system — and, unless you fight for it, no care. When the NHS was done trying to fix my 88-year-old father's broken hip, it dumped him in a chaotic, TV-blaring limbo ward like the dayroom in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

To free this deaf, immobile, slowly dying man from hell, my mother and I trawled potential nursing homes equipped only with patchy Care Quality Commission reports and our eyes. Though at least I knew what to do seven years later when I rushed north to find my mother, by then 95, dehydrated, delirious and abandoned on a hospital trolley after yet another fall.

For well over a decade, I witnessed the best and worst of elderly care via my parents, my godmother who had dementia and as a journalist writing about homes both here and in the Netherlands. It forced me to confront what we delude ourselves will never happen: one day we'll leave our beloved, lifelong home to be tended by strangers in a small impersonal room.

This fingers-in-ears attitude to mortality is understandable and also why governments always swerve solutions. For about 30 months (the average nursing home stay) social care is your most pressing issue. Then your mum dies and — what relief! — your thoughts return to pleasanter things. But now we have a prime minister whose father's prolonged, brutally unfair Alzheimer's has bestowed on him the attention span and political will.

Everything, Andy Burnham assures us, is on the table for a national care service. Louise Casey's report will be expedited, the PM wants cross-party input and a broad public consultation. So far Burnham has sounded pragmatic and open-minded. Maybe there's hope of creating a system that doesn't just move bed-blockers and sort out funding but considers bold ideas to ease old age's misery and dread.

> Experienced carers often receive no more than a new recruit

First we must keep people out of residential homes for as long as we can. A national care service must start with changing NHS culture so elderly folk who enter hospital for routine procedures don't leave no longer able to walk or dress themselves because it was easier to bring a bedpan than slowly walk them to the loo. Old people plummet, mentally and physically, away from routines. Yet discharge them too soon, still weak, and they will be back again. We need better recuperation wards and proper follow-up physio, not just a leaflet and a prayer.

Burnham is misguided to see the NHS as some paradigm for elderly care: my mentally alert mother was kept in a geriatric ward with only dementia patients or left in her room ignored by nurses. I sprang her from that hospital without discharge approval: she was miserable, neglected and unkempt.

The prime minister will centre his service around charity, non-profit and community homes. He associates private care with the rapacious, profiteering Southern Cross. But, honestly, where would you rather spend a prolonged stay: an NHS ward or a private bed? Councils sold nursing homes decades ago: 85 per cent are now privately owned, many run for decades by the same family, or are part of a small local chain that strives for high standards to ensure its beds are full.

I've visited £100,000-a-year homes with lavish grounds and fine crockery, but these baubles aren't for residents — who arrive in their mid-80s too ill to notice soft furnishings — but to impress visitors and make relatives feel less guilty. The home where my parents died was a plain stone building with no garden but made outstanding by the quality of its staff.

It is time to stop seeing care as a terrible, demeaning job because

> My generation can't complain about our estates being taxed

women do it unpaid. "Bum-wiping", as Zack Polanski called it. I met carers who love that every shift they make a difference with a hug or a joke.

A 19-year-old joined my mum's home because she'd had a special bond with her gran, as the young often have with the old. Another woman said she was leaving reluctantly after 12 years "but a new hotel is opening and they pay better".

Care work is not just minimum wage but has no career progression or salary increments. Experienced carers often receive no more than a new recruit, even if they are highly skilled, give injections, deal with dementia or fit stoma bags. We would not need a Boriswave of cheap migrant labour to fill vacancies if we valued the carers we have.

A new service will cost billions and my generation who've benefited from property prices can't complain about our estates being taxed after our death. It is better than loading up the young who struggle to buy a home at all. But we have a right, as the next in line to need care, to demand it serves our needs. Let's stop imprisoning old people in corridors with digital key pads where they can't go into the garden without permission.

I used to take an old lady at my mum's home out for a cigarette when the staff didn't have time and thought how much I would loathe this limit on my basic freedom.

The Dutch created a care home where students receive free accommodation in exchange for 30 hours socialising with residents, and at the famous De Hogeweyk village in Weesp, dementia patients wander freely around a compound and live in households of likeminded souls. Put a crèche on the ground floor so residents can be cheered by little children, install a community café so the place is alive. A national care service shouldn't just warehouse the old but be where we can imagine our future selves.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Lack of gas storage

Sir, Juliet Samuel is right in condemning the lack of gas storage since gas was privatised ("Our reckless lack of gas storage invites disaster", comment, Jul 30). But her conclusion that we should spend millions of pounds on enhanced gas storage is to throw good money after bad. We have to cut our reliance on fossil fuel, not perpetuate it. Gas has always been defended as the energy that can be instantly available during lulls in renewable production. But a better solution is to set about storing more of the energy from renewables — which we have the technology to do — not to build more gas storage or prop up poor storage, such as the Rough facility. The disastrous effects of fossil fuel-driven climate change are clearer than ever this year. We have to go for better solutions than old gas technology.
Professor Peter Gardiner
Former head, School of Environment, Brighton University; Ringmer, E Sussex

Sir, Juliet Samuel's article reminded me that in 1969 there was a proposal to explode a nuclear device underground at Wheeldale in the North York Moors National Park to create a cavern that could be used for gas storage. The idea was to drill a large deep hole in the moors, drop a nuclear device down it, explode it and then use the resulting massive cave for gas storage. While I admire such a bold idea, I am relieved the proposal was never followed up as I live only a few miles from the proposed site of the nuclear explosion.
Rooney Massara
Wrelton, N Yorks

The donkey vote

Sir, I hesitate to correct such a distinguished political scientist as Sir Vernon Bogdanor, but he is in error on two counts when he says the "donkey vote" benefits those "who come early in the alphabet as the donkeys simply mark the name at the top of the ballot paper" (letters, Jul 30 & 31). Aaron and Aardvark have no advantage in Australia. Ballot paper positions have been assigned randomly since 1984. Further, a voter who "simply marks" the first occurring candidate would cast an informal vote. A formal vote requires every square to be numbered so that the voter's preference is clear. Political parties do regard it as a slight plus if their candidate is at the top of the ballot paper but it is rarely significant.
Malcolm Turnbull
Former prime minister of Australia

Corrections and clarifications

ipso. Regulated *The Times* takes complaints about editorial content seriously. We are committed to abiding by the Independent Press Standards Organisation ("IPSO") rules and regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces. Requests for corrections or clarifications should be sent by email to feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to Feedback, The Times, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Fifa's controversial plan to sell the World Cup

Sir, Gianni Infantino has clearly boxed himself into a corner, where his position as Fifa president is untenable ("Uefa backs World Cup boycott", Jul 31). Meddling with the laws of the game by Fifa suspending a red card was the second indicator that he believed himself to be above the rules. The first was his appalling lack of judgment in awarding a Fifa peace prize to President Trump. That he seems now to have got "fully into bed" with Trump and his family cronies over the sale of the game's birthright to the highest bidders shows contempt for democratic process and an even worse contempt for football's leaders.

A grovelling apology would not work. Infantino has learnt nothing from the mistakes made by those who preceded him. He has lost whatever credibility he had, and the game's leaders should insist that he resign.
Howard JC Wells
Former CEO, Irish Football Association; Berkhamsted, Herts

Sir, Gerard Baker describes Uefa's opposition to Gianni Infantino's proposals as evidence of a European "anti-market, anti-capitalist" mentality ("Fifa hysteria shows Europe's growth problem", Jul 31). It is the reverse. Baker makes no mention of the most important element of any sporting competition: the players. They are employed by the clubs, which bear the costs of training facilities, stadiums, medical care and, above all, salaries. Fifa is vested with the responsibility of organising global football tournaments. The clubs accept the disruption this causes to them, as the World Cup is the game's biggest showcase, and can enhance the reputation (and value) of their players.

When the revenues generated are reinvested into developing football around the world, that arrangement is defensible. But it is quite another thing to argue that international football should allow "some people to get filthy rich". Infantino's proposal is about Fifa exploiting its monopoly over global tournaments, increasing the number of matches and perhaps holding a World Cup every two years. Those becoming rich from this would take on little of the underlying risk. That's not capitalism, it's free-riding.
Dr Craig Prescott
Royal Holloway School of Law

Sir, Gerard Baker misses two key points in his argument that Uefa's stance is symptomatic of a European aversion to dynamic capitalism. First, by and large, the sporting events that have sought out private investment have done it out of need or desperation. Early estimates indicate that the recent World Cup may have generated profits of £10 billion or more. The next World Cup is in Europe, if it happens, and will generate huge amounts of money.

The second is that plans of this scale normally require a credible and respected author, and proper consultation among stakeholders. It seems unlikely that Uefa would have reacted so rapidly and unanimously if the proposal had come about with both in place. It is high time football created an alternative governing body to safeguard the world's greatest game.
Robert Mason
Felbridge, W Sussex

Sir, Uefa should finish the job it has brilliantly started by demanding that Infantino resign, before agreeing to compete in Fifa competitions. And South American players would not be able to join Uefa clubs while Uefa is outside Fifa. They might have something to say about that.
Simon Hunter
Brookmans Park, Herts

Gove on education

Sir, Michael Gove's article ("Labour's education policy is 'bring back stupid' ", Jul 30) was not surprising as he was the architect of the Conservatives' policy of academic education, instilling a "higher level of reasoning", so much needed in this automated world. But Labour's new education policy is not stupid. Technical education in schools is as much needed, particularly when it comes to getting a job. Further than that: I remember the poet the Rev Professor (of English literature) Moelwyn Merchant as the principal speaker at the annual meeting of the Headmasters' Conference telling us that after he had taken up sculpture at the age of 70 he had begun to write far better poetry. There is room for both academic and technical in the school curriculum, each needing the other. After all, was not Jesus a carpenter and St Paul a tent maker? Both were well versed in the scriptures.
John Strover
Yetminster, Dorset

Sir, I admire Michael Gove but find it hard to agree with his article. The number of graduates today far surpasses that in FE Smith's time, when an undergraduate could be virtually sure of "glittering prizes" on graduation. There are countless graduates today with excellent degrees who cannot find jobs. Perhaps 14 is too young to decide on a future that discounts further education, but it seems to me that the idea of students going to university, incurring huge debt and then being unable to find a job should not be a goal for all.
Barbara Godfrey
Arborfield Cross, Berks

Sir, During his time as education secretary, Michael Gove introduced us to the British version of American charter schools. I started two of them. They offered choice for the simple reason that every child was different and, if sufficient local groups wanted a different curriculum and teachers wanted a different contract, one could open a school in their neighbourhood, freed of familiar constraints. Why is he now championing uniformity and pretending that academic education is the only education that matters?
Sir Mark Featherstone-Witty
Founder of the BRIT School and Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

Fawlty friendship

Sir, The Rev Matthew Hutton's visit to Germany (letter, Jul 31) reminded me of when I visited our penfriends in Essen in the 1970s with my sister. We were impressed by their standard of living (they had a sauna). We were also anxious not to cause offence, especially with anything war-related. It was not long after the *Fawlty Towers* episode in which Basil offends his German guests. "Don't mention the war" became our whispered mantra because they kept bringing it up, eg when we swam across a reservoir that they told us had been breached by the Dambusters.
Graham Ashen
Horsham, W Sussex

Trapping mice

Sir, Further to Nigel Farndale's Notebook (Jul 31) on catching mice, the original humane trap for small rodents was called the Longworth Trap. It was invented in 1949 and I remember using it to collect mice for biology projects at school in the 1960s.
Dr Andrew Iddles
Gosport, Hants

THREE KILLED IN CHURCH INSURGENCY

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 2, 1926

The tense atmosphere prevailing in Mexico City resulted in bloodshed on July 30 as the Government officials proceeded to take charge of the buildings annexed to the churches and to seal up the ecclesiastical treasures, in accordance with the State Decrees, which became effective yesterday.

When Government agents entered the Barrio Tepite Church, in the lower quarter of the city, the crowd attempted to resist. The police insisted upon closing the doors. Shots were then fired and the sacristan was killed and two bystanders were mortally wounded. Seventeen were wounded in an earlier riot, when women attempted to carry a statue of Our Lord across a neighbouring plaza. Shooting also occurred in the aristocratic quarter of San Rafael, when the congregation refused to leave the church at the priest's direction. Disregarding the closing order, the crowd stoned the police and cut the fire hoses, but was finally dispersed by Federal troops.

Yesterday passed quietly in the capital. In the evening the police announced that they had arrested seven men and two women for an alleged plot against the life of President Calles with a young City Hall stenographer as a leader. Several hundred troops surrounded the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, but that did not prevent the stream of pilgrims from pouring in from all parts of the countryside. Throughout the Federal district most of the churches remained open for prayer. The Cathedral was closed to enable the priests to make an inventory of all treasures. Few priests were seen in the streets. The authorities were generally confident as calmness prevailed yesterday, but large forces of troops and police are held ready in barracks.

Feeling in the countryside is, on the whole, reported to be much milder than that prevailing in the capital, except in Puebla, where the congregations defied the authorities to close their numerous churches. In Guadalajara, another stronghold of the Church, the authorities contented themselves with passive vigilance over church property.

Some 400 nuns, many of them disguised, have reached San Antonio, in Texas, and other clerical refugees are expected all along the border.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Church conversions

Sir, Are we content to see our country denuded of churches? Malcolm Jack's article on church closures, "God's house to your house" (Bricks & Mortar, Jul 31), depicts these buildings as purely development opportunities. Churches are not like other historic buildings: they are the spiritual investment of generations, built and sustained with faith. For generations, they have belonged to their community. They still belong to all of us. They are also often filled with incredibly beautiful and important fittings and works of art. Private ownership flies in the face of this.

The Mission and Pastoral Measure referred to in the article has been under review since 2021. Recent proposals recommend buying-in advice, reducing the role of the state-appointed representatives on closure panels, and changing processes so contents can be cleared out in advance of a disposal decision. Collectively, these are presented as "streamlining" but are more like undermining. They lose impartiality, consistency and national oversight.

Rather than dilute this, we should demand that the oldest and most important buildings in our country are given rigorous care and consideration. This includes proper support for the congregations, communities and charities that sustain these places for us all.
Rachel Morley FSA
Director, the Friends of Friendless Churches; author of *Church Crawling*

Sir, Not all church closures are bad news. The west London church where I was christened has been tastefully converted into upmarket flats. When they went on the market, I was one of the first to take a look around. It was good to see the formerly derelict building resurrected.

More importantly, the area around it now has a thriving parish church in a better location and several other places of worship. In some contexts, and over time, church closures can lead to renewal and growth.
The Rev Peter Crumpler
St Albans

Entitled offspring

Sir, Adam Handling's account of children wrecking his pub's chicken coop struck a chord ("Chef rebukes parents after bad eggs ruin chicken coop", Jul 31). During my years as a teacher and head teacher, I rarely met a bad child but I did encounter a few bad parents. That lesson was reinforced recently on a train from St Pancras, when a mother travelling with primary school-aged children asked me, a man in my seventies, to give up my seat so one of her children could sit down. The request seemed to reflect less necessity than entitlement.
Enda Cullen
Armagh

Living longer

Sir, My wife's mother lived on her own without any care assistance until she was 96. For four years, she continued to live on her own with an hour's help in the morning and evening. Having turned 100, she finally moved to a care home. Approaching 102, although she agrees with Professor Sir Muir Gray's assertion that it's never too late to increase fitness etc (letter, Jul 31), she has said that she's happy to do so as long as she can continue to have her daily glass of sherry.
Gary Rawlinson
Burbage, Wilts

Daily Universal Register

Commonwealth Games, Glasgow, day ten, including the men's mile, featuring the world record-holder Josh Kerr of Scotland.

Birthdays today

Katie Boulter, *pictured*, tennis player, 30; **Prof Dame Janet Beer**, president, Universities UK (2017-19), 70; **Lara Boro**, chief executive, The Economist Group, 59; **Neil Bradley**, UK high commissioner to Namibia, 57; **Sir Ronald Cohen**, co-founder of Apax Partners, 81; **Robert Cray**, blues guitarist, five-time Grammy award winner, 73; **Ray Dalio**, founder of Bridgewater Associates, 77; **Sir Harry Djanogly**, chairman, Coats thread company (1999-2003), 88; **Sir Oliver Dowden**, deputy prime minister (2023-24), 48; **Adrian Dunbar**, actor and director, *Line of Duty* (2012-21), 68; **Ramblin' Jack Elliott**, folk singer and storyteller, 95; **Joe Elliott**, lead singer of Def Leppard, *Pour Some Sugar on Me* (1987), 67; **Sir John Griffin**, founder of Addison Lee, 84; **Fiona Hyslop**, Scottish transport secretary (2024-2026), 62; **David James**, footballer, England (1997-2010), 56; **Mervyn Kitchen**, Test cricket umpire (1990-2000), 86; **Sir Sam Mendes**, director, *Spectre* (2015), 61; **Amber Rudd**, home secretary (2016-18), 63; **Laurie Taylor**, professor of sociology, University of York (1974-93), 91; **Rt Rev Graham Tomlin**, Bishop of Kensington (2015-22), 68; **Anthony Fane, Earl of Westmorland**, 75; **Mark Wright**, footballer, England (1984-96), 63; **Alexander Wynaendts**, chairman of the supervisory board of Deutsche Bank AG, 66.

Birthdays tomorrow

JD Vance, *pictured*, US vice-president, 42; **Isabel Allende**, novelist, *The House of the Spirits* (1982), 84; **Sir Michael Bibby**, chairman, Bibby Line Group, 63; **Jacob Collier**, musician, winner of seven Grammy awards, 32; **Matthew Crummack**, chief executive, Domestic & General, 56; **Andy Fairweather Low**, guitarist and songwriter, Amen Corner, *(If Paradise Is) Half As Nice* (1969), 78; **Julia Foster**, actress, *Alfie* (1966), 83; **Lily Gladstone**, actress, *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023), 40; **Nigel Hitchin**, Savilian professor of geometry, University of Oxford (1997-2016), 80; **Gundula Janowitz**, opera singer, 89; **Sammy McIlroy**, footballer, Manchester United (1971-82) and Northern Ireland (1972-87), and manager, Northern Ireland (2000-03), 72; **Sir Paul Marshall**, chairman and chief investment officer, Marshall Wace (hedge fund group), founder and publisher of UnHerd, owner of The Spectator and co-owner of GB News, 67; **Lord (Simon) Murray of Blidworth**, minister for migration and borders (2022-23), 52; **Butch Patrick**, actor, *The Munsters* (1964-66), 73; **Sir Anthony Seldon**, political biographer, 73; **Madeline Smith**, actress, *Live and Let Die* (1973), 77; **Rose Tremain**, writer, *Sacred Country* (1992), 83; **Sam Worthington**, actor, Avatar film series, 50; **Charli XCX** (Charlotte Aitchison), singer-songwriter, *Boom Clap* (2014), and actress, 34.

On this day

In 1922 the Balfour Note, signed by the foreign secretary Arthur Balfour, stated Britain's policy on First World War debt: that no more would be asked from its debtors than was required to pay its creditors.

The last word

"My political ideal is democratic ... Force always attracts men of low morality." Albert Einstein, *Mein Weltbild* (1934)

Closed for Business

BP's decision to put its North Sea oil interests up for sale is a sign of the UK's misguided attitude to energy and investment. A rethink is long overdue

Charlie Munger, the late right-hand man to the investor Warren Buffett, once quipped: "Show me the incentive and I'll show you the outcome." Take this maxim and apply it to the UK's energy sector and it should be no surprise that BP is putting its North Sea operations up for sale. Meg O'Neill, who was appointed the company's chief executive in April, has concluded that 60 years of operating in the basin may be enough. BP has 13,960 employees in the UK and about 1,100 of them work across five production hubs in the North Sea. The basin may be ageing with output falling, but it remains symbolic for the company and the country.

The blame partially lies with a series of poor decisions by the present and previous governments. One is on taxation. After Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the Conservative government slapped a windfall tax on the oil and gas sector to help subsidise energy bills. It perhaps gave too little consideration to what it would mean for investment incentives — particularly for firms such as BP that are aiding the transition to lower-carbon energy. Ms O'Neill warned at the time of the initial tax that it would be a "red flag" for investment. It has since been increased by Labour so the North Sea is subject to a 78 per cent effective tax rate.

It is not only the tax, however, that may spell the end of BP's North Sea production. Successive governments have also dithered on whether they want to further develop or run down the basin — with an eye on net zero targets. It was Theresa May's government that first legislated for binding net zero targets. Boris Johnson, her successor, then doubled down with further unrealistic ambitions. The North Sea was put on the back burner, dismissed as a declining asset, until the Ukraine war exposed the need for energy security. Belatedly, the Tories realised that North Sea energy was vital but came to that realisation too late to do much about it when in office.

When Ms O'Neill took over BP, she acknowledged there was "untapped potential" in the North Sea but warned that it would be subject to discussions with the government. Meanwhile the "energy profits levy" has remained in place and investors have been left in the dark about whether more drilling is likely to happen. Since then, little appears to have happened to encourage the sector. In the stark conclusion of Biraj Borkhataria, an analyst at RBC Capital Markets, the basin is "uninvestable" at present. He added: "The UK does not compete, with the UK government seemingly having no interest in changing that."

The Starmer government dithered on the North Sea. The 2024 Labour manifesto committed the party to no new exploration licences. Ed Miliband, an ardent net zero advocate who was then the energy secretary, took a sceptical view of increasing production and initially declined to greenlight the Rosebank and Jackdaw oil and gas fields. Yet even he, by the end of his time in office, may have realised that it would be a wise move to approve the Jackdaw project. Miatta Fahnbulleh, the new energy secretary, has pledged to be pragmatic on drilling. So too has Andy Burnham, who is said to have told President Trump that there were resources he would not waste.

Above all, BP's decision is a devastating indictment of UK plc and how open it is for business. Throughout his first fortnight in office, the prime minister has acted swiftly but not when it comes to growth and energy security. This should be a stark reminder that excessive taxation and red tape have consequences. Mr Burnham should ignore the whims of Labour backbenchers and do whatever he can to make the North Sea a more investable prospect. That is about taxes but also about projecting certainty. Or, to channel Mr Munger, the government must realise that bad incentives mean bad outcomes.

In Plain Sight

Events in Ceuta and the Channel expose a visibly broken immigration system

The images of thousands of Moroccan migrants storming the Spanish territory of Ceuta by land and sea on Thursday have been beamed around the world. The influx of an estimated 60,000 people — mostly young men and male adolescents — within 24 hours caused an immediate crisis that overwhelmed both residents and the authorities: the regular population of Ceuta, an autonomous city that covers seven square miles on the north coast of Africa, is 85,000.

The unprecedented scenes were also a source of embarrassment for the Spanish prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, a left-wing politician who previously came under fire from the opposition for a policy that could grant qualified legal status to more than one million unauthorised migrants living in Spain. The Ceuta situation prompted a more muscular response: he described it as "an attack, a violation of Spain's territorial integrity". At least 57 people died trying to enter the city by sea. Spanish soldiers were deployed to bolster security and the country's interior ministry said that 48,000 migrants had voluntarily returned to Morocco.

One trigger for events may lie in recent tensions between Madrid and Rabat, which has used unchecked migration to exert political leverage before. A recent Spanish Supreme Court judgment, too, ruled that migrants who arrived by sea in Ceuta or its sister city, Melilla, could not be summarily returned, but must be processed through formal immigration channels. As ever, the people-trafficking gangs were at the ready.

For many onlookers, however, the chaotic scenes have also crystallised a broader perception of a European Union unable to police its own borders against illegal migration. Spain's 1991 entry to the open-border Schengen agreement contains an undertaking that all travellers from Ceuta and Melilla will undergo additional border checks before passing on to the wider EU. Nonetheless, many of the recent arrivals in these Spanish cities will have undoubted ambitions to move on. This has rattled the ruling parties of Spain's fellow EU countries, many of which are acutely conscious of anti-immigration hard-right rivals snapping at their heels. Italy suspended free movement from Spain, while calls for action were echoed by Finland and Denmark, and France tightened its border checks.

The travails of Mr Sánchez carry a warning for Andy Burnham, after a week that included the busiest day for small boat crossings this year: 752 people arrived in the UK on Wednesday alone, and four died in the attempt. Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, filmed French gendarmes coolly watching dinghies set off for the UK, despite a £650 million deal to stop them. Although the number of cross-Channel migrants is down by 42 per cent on this time last year — and UK-French co-operation has elsewhere imposed at least a measure of restraint — the continuing fact of their arrival is read by many voters as a sign of governmental impotence.

The European parliament has now passed rules allowing third-party "return hubs" for rejected asylum seekers, but thus far found no practicable or agreed route to a coherent deterrent. Yet in both the EU and Britain, voters often do not wish to close off routes to legal immigration or legitimate asylum entirely, but want new arrivals to be demonstrably subject to popular consent and government control. The scenes in Ceuta, and in the Channel, still testify all too visibly to the opposite.

Neverland's Legacy

Extending royalties for Britain's cultural giants could provide revenue for charity

A boy who wouldn't grow up funds a hospital for sick children. In 1929 JM Barrie unconditionally assigned copyright in his play *Peter Pan* to Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. At the time, we said in our leader columns: "The boy who was ever a being remote and shut off from his fellows is to help other children back to life." He still does, and his activities offer a precedent for an imaginative proposal to help other good causes.

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, former director of strategy for Rishi Sunak as prime minister, argues that royalties for other notable cultural figures could be extended, with revenues going to charity. Richard Morrison, our chief culture writer, provisionally welcomed this idea in his column yesterday.

Copyright usually extends to 70 years after an author, artist or composer's death. It will expire over the next 20 years for several British cultural giants, including Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten. Extending royalties, without other aspects of copyright protection (such as the right to refuse permission to perform the work), would harm no one yet may provide cultural organisations with an enduring revenue stream.

The model exists. The 1988 Copyright Act granted Great Ormond Street Hospital continuing royalties from *Peter Pan*. That could be adopted on a wider scale. Arts Council England, the body for arts funding, would not be the right vehicle to oversee the scheme: it was sharply criticised for excessive bureaucracy and political interference in an independent review by Baroness Hodge of Barking last year. But a new charity, with trustees serving limited terms, might command more credibility. It takes more than creative talent to sustain a nation's cultural life. More prosaically, it takes a framework that combines copyright protection, public access and hard cash. This proposal balances them. It merits a hearing.

Comment

Write to Feedback by emailing feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Robots haven't a clue how to do our crossword

Mick Hodgkin
Feedback

@TIMESFEEDBACK

'Struggling with the cryptic crossword a few weeks ago, I asked AI for help," wrote Jenny Kenyon in a letter last Friday, "only to be assured that 'the perfect anagram for nationsmen is sentimental'. I think it has some way to go."

Nicholas Pennington was appalled — but not at AI's incorrect anagram. "I was concerned to note that Jenny Kenyon appears to be resorting to a source of reference while trying to solve the puzzle," he wrote. "In my book, this is cheating. For me, a crossword cannot be said to have been properly and successfully completed unless this is achieved purely from one's own knowledge and inspiration, without reference to the dictionary, encyclopaedia, Google or — far, far worse — AI."

Martin Wainscott's riposte to Nicholas was that "unless he was born with an innate understanding of 17th-century poets and obscure botanical terms, all human knowledge was acquired from dictionaries, encyclopaedias or experience at some point in time".

This debate is far from new. In last week's puzzles newsletter I cited a 1953 letter to The Sunday Times from JW Joel, who reported among his crossword-solving friends "a distinct cleavage of opinion on the propriety of the use of reference books in order to complete the missing words.

"Personally I feel that it is a matter of honour not to use a reference book," he wrote, "but to profit from the knowledge gained in the subsequent week when the unknown words are disclosed in the official solution of the previous puzzle."

There is no right answer to this. If you are competing in the Times Crossword Championship then exam rules apply but otherwise solvers are free to play by their own rules. In the case of Rae Robbins this means that "when my husband and I complete any crossword in The Times he places a large tick next to it. If we have had to resort to outside information he then crosses the stem once for each case. It doesn't count if you are merely checking an answer, provided it has already been filled in on the grid."

I certainly won't judge anyone using solving aids when tackling the Listener crossword over in the Review section.

In a pickle

There are similar arguments when it comes to our online archive geo-guessing game Picle, launched earlier this year. Interviewed by Kate McCann and Stig Abell on Times Radio last month, the puzzle's creator Chris Youngs was asked whether it was OK to Google when trying to work out when and where a photo was taken, and said yes. The aptly named Barry Toogood disagreed: "Using online search tools for Picle is surely a huge cheat," he emailed. "One could just put the picture into an AI and ask for the answer, but as my teachers used to say a very long time ago, 'You're only cheating yourself'."

Tosh Moller, conversely, says: "I routinely consult the internet and Google Earth and thereby indulge in a degree of 'cheating', but I discover a lot about the pictures by this approach and that satisfies my curiosity."

"How many people would get to a correct result without some research?", asks David Kerr. "I have done almost 70 Picles now and the only place I recognised at first sight was Tobermory and I still had to guess at the year. Doing the detective work using the clues available is most of the challenge and provides the element of fun in doing the puzzles."

What I would take from this is that there are two ways to do this puzzle: look at the photo and give it your best guess, or research on the basis of the available clues and see if you can nail it. I reckon either is valid.

Frisky business

We certainly use various online tools in setting Picle, not least to help us fix the locations as accurately as possible. Trevor Wright emailed this week: "To be fairer to those who've tried to pinpoint the position of the photographer in Picle and who've been just 1 yard out a few times like me, I think it would be fairer if you stated the focal length of the lens used to take the photograph."

Focal length? I assured Trevor that although we have access to the archive caption, that won't tell us exactly where the photographer was standing, never mind what lens was being used. And with 40,000 people a day Picling away, some of you will be better at it than we are.

In the past few weeks solvers have emailed to correct our misidentification of an iPhone 14 Plus as an iPhone 14 Pro and a gaff-rigged sailing yacht as a Norfolk wherry. But my favourite piece of specialist feedback came from Peter Butt, who wrote on Monday that he had been able to date our photo from Chiddingstone, Kent because a car just visible in the background of the picture was a Meadows Frisky Family Three, which he says was "a fairly rare three wheeler from around 1960" I can't think of a more Sixties name for a car.

Going bust

'Disappointed that today's Polygon included bottom and bosom but disallowed 'moob' — presumably it is too new to have reached the dictionary yet!" wrote Peter Hillman about last Saturday's puzzle. Peter was spot on in his presumption. Although 'moob' (as a contraction of 'man boob') was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2016, it has yet to make it into Polygon's chosen reference — the Concise Oxford Dictionary was last updated in 2011. Collins and Chambers have done better at keeping abreast of linguistic developments but both list "moobs" only as a plural noun, which would be disallowed in Polygon anyway.

Mick Hodgkin is Puzzles Editor

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Exclusively for solo travellers

Save up to £250 per person on selected departures*

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,449*
per person

Northern Cyprus hidden history

September 2026 to November 2027

Price includes

- Return flights from London and regional airports, plus overseas transportation
- Seven nights in a four-star hotel
- Seven breakfasts, one lunch, seven dinners including a welcome drink and farewell dinner
- Kyrenia Castle and harbour tour
- St Hilarion Castle and Bellapais Monastery
- A day of tasting with the locals at Akdeniz village

Discover the rich history, warm hospitality and breathtaking scenery of Northern Cyprus on this relaxing escape. Based in the charming harbour town of Kyrenia, you'll explore impressive landmarks including Kyrenia Castle, the fairytale-like St Hilarion Castle and the beautiful Bellapais Monastery, while enjoying plenty of time to soak up the Mediterranean atmosphere at your own pace. A visit to the traditional village of Akdeniz offers the chance to meet local people and sample authentic Cypriot flavours, adding a personal touch to your journey. Blending fascinating history, picturesque coastal views and leisurely free time, this tour is the perfect introduction to one of the Mediterranean's best-kept secrets.

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

CALL TODAY ON
0808 304 7797
thetimes.com/jy-cyprus
QUOTE TIMES

Our trusted partner just you | ABTA Travel with confidence

*Discount on selected departures only and already deducted from advertised price. Prices correct at time of print. Prices shown are based on single occupancy of a double or twin bedded room with private facilities and economy flights/rail travel where applicable. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Just You. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Just You, ABTA Y6412, ATOL 11266 a company wholly independent of News UK. Discount applies to selected holidays. New bookings only. Visit website for full terms & conditions.

Jodrell Bank could be saved, but at what cost to other vital research?

Rhys Blakely

The campaign to save Jodrell Bank's giant Lovell telescope has everything it could want: a cracking backstory steeped in Cold War lore, a proud record of scientific discovery and an enormous radio dish that looks magnificent on a newspaper front page. It also has famous supporters, including the physicist Brian Cox, who can explain why the telescope matters, as both a working scientific instrument and a symbol of national intellectual ambition.

The news that it could fall silent in 2028 is regrettable to many, humiliating even: another sign that a country that calls itself a science superpower is unwilling to pay for the institutions that made such a claim plausible. There is, however, a question absent from the campaign: if the observatory is saved, what other project should lose funding instead?

Campaigns against cuts tend to proceed as though the contentious decision exists in isolation. The threatened institution presents itself, often with justification, as valuable and difficult to replace. But the bodies that allocate public research funding cannot judge whether something is valuable in the abstract. They must decide whether it is more valuable than something else.

The choices aren't between good science and frivolous expenditure. They are between radio astronomy and cancer trials; between particle accelerators and work on Alzheimer's; between "curiosity-driven" research (the budget for which will stay flat for four years) and work that promises quicker returns (which will rise); between maintaining historic facilities and giving younger researchers a chance to create new things.

Reasonable people can disagree over whether the science budget should maintain Jodrell Bank as a data-gathering observatory. The Lovell telescope is the hub of e-Merlin, which includes smaller dishes across England. It is e-Merlin's £2.8 million annual funding that is being withdrawn. Unless other money is found, those running Jodrell Bank say the Lovell telescope will fall silent.

Yet e-Merlin has been surpassed by newer systems and some senior astronomers do not believe there is a strong scientific case for maintaining it. Nor is Britain abandoning radio astronomy. Jodrell Bank will remain the headquarters of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), one of the world's largest and most ambitious international astronomy projects. Signals gathered in Australia and South Africa will be sent to Cheshire. Britain will contribute about £327 million over a decade, roughly a fifth of the overall budget.

The fact that e-Merlin has been overtaken does not mean the Lovell telescope has no value. Recent work suggests it could track hostile satellites with extraordinary precision. Ministry of Defence researchers are said to oppose its closure. Others point to its symbolic importance. The vast telescope is the kind of structure that inspires young people.

The case for saving it may therefore lie outside academic astronomy. If its value is scientific, research funders must compare it with other projects, including the SKA. If it is a heritage asset, cultural funding may be appropriate. If it provides a sovereign surveillance capability, the defence budget should bear some of the cost.

If the Lovell telescope is truly a national asset, the nation should save it. But the department that values it needs to pay.

Tom Whipple is away

Why I'm roused by the marquess's death

David Queensberry was a great potter and designer but he fell under the spell of a money man and Wedgwood went bust

AN Wilson

ALAMY

The Potteries once employed 80,000 people. David Queensberry, below, said that his career at the helm of Wedgwood was constantly overshadowed by a predecessor's role in the downfall of Oscar Wilde

Hear the name "the Marquess of Queensberry" and you will probably think of Oscar Wilde, or of boxing, or of both. But I am a child of North Staffordshire. My father, like David Queensberry, was an industrial potter and designer. The two were friends but they came to disagree profoundly over the future of their industry. So when I heard David had died, aged 96, I was sorry: but with my sorrow for him there was also sorrow for the industry that was once one of the glories of Great Britain and has now been reduced to a shadow.

When my father, Norman Wilson, was managing director of Wedgwood in the late 1950s and early 1960s, about 80,000 people in Stoke-on-Trent worked in the Potteries. That was what the cluster of towns was called, and their products — Doulton, Minton, Wedgwood — were household names. What happened to them all is something which in my mind has become an allegory of what happened to England and why we are irreversibly down the drain.

We are a country that became rich and eventually democratic because wealth came not from aristocratic families but from industry, from clever people who made objects that other people wanted to buy.

Some people — among them a lamentably large number of politicians — assume that business, especially the manufacturing business, is somehow the enemy of Britain. I can never forget or forgive Boris Johnson for saying "f*** business". And of course most lefties would agree with him, equating "business" with capitalism. Others on the right, like Mrs Thatcher, are also under the impression that "business" and "capitalism" are the same thing. But speculative capitalism is the enemy of good business, and if you don't believe me, go to Stoke-on-Trent and tread its bleak, sad streets and look at the wasteland where the old pot banks used to make dinner services and bathroom fittings for the rest of the planet. None of this was inevitable. None of it had to happen.

The obituary of the Marquess of Queensberry, which appeared in this newspaper this week, quoted him as saying: "One can have a lifetime of serious design, responsible for a business worth £130 million a year, and the only thing that interests people is what one's great uncle got up to in the 19th century." He referred, of course, to the perennially interesting story of Lord Alfred Douglas whose father, the 9th marquess, wrote a misspelt visiting card at the club of one Oscar Wilde, adding the message that Wilde was "posing as somdomite". Wilde, crazily, sued. The marquess and the police arrayed enough witnesses to establish that poor old Wilde had fallen foul of Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885.

It is understandable that the 12th marquess, a distinguished ceramicist, should have become impatient when people expressed more interest in the Wilde trial than in his own life as a designer, principally for Terence Conran. He was also professor of ceramics at the Royal College of Art from 1959 to 1983.

He was friends with my father, admired his work, and used to ask him to go to the Royal College of Art as an examiner in the ceramics department. Then, in the very early 1960s, Wedgwood made a fateful decision. It was a highly profitable well-run family firm. But along came a whizz-kid, Arthur Bryan, who had started life as a bank clerk in Longton, one of the Pottery towns, and become the Wedgwood sales rep in New York where he displayed near genius at selling Wedgwood to the Americans even though he knew nothing about pottery. He knew about money.

On the strength of this he became a director (the board was tiny) and he persuaded the chairman, Josiah Wedgwood V, that they should float on the stock market. The board was divided, with a minority supporting my father, who thought it would destroy the firm. Bryan won the day, succeeding my dad as managing director. All the directors made a lot of money as the share price soared over the next few years.

Bryan proceeded to go round the other old Pottery firms — Adams, Johnsons, Meakin, Doulton — buying them up and asset-stripping. He made the same speech whenever he appeared on the scene: "Have no fear! Your work place is safe. Your job is safe. But you will now be part of the great Wedgwood conglomerate." Needless to say, this monster conglomerate was itself bought by another conglomerate — Waterford Crystal. The whole thing went bust. Wedgwood was taken into receivership and at one point it looked as if everything would be lost, including the priceless Wedgwood museum (this was rescued by the heroic intervention of our then MP, Sir Tristram Hunt, now director of the V&A and biographer of Josiah Wedgwood the First).

David Queensberry was taken up by Bryan, who saw the potential of his cool new lines. Some of his most stunning designs were sold by a company absorbed by Bryan into Wedgwood. So, of course, Queensberry liked Bryan, who made him very rich. And he thought Bryan and his like had brought verve, imagination, money know-how to a fuddy-duddy old industry. David could not see that, far from bolstering the industry, the money-men — Bryan principally — destroyed it. Like so many other manufacturing industries, pottery was making a lot of money and employing a lot of people by actually making pots rather than benefiting speculators on the stock market.

It is for this reason that so many of today's entrepreneurs in Britain do not float on the stock market. Bryan, the clever money man, could not tell the difference between a good design and a boiled potato. He only saw short-term profits and knew how to make money out of asset-stripping. He was the polar opposite of the founding fathers of the Industrial Revolution, such as Josiah Wedgwood or of the great Victorian Herbert Minton, he of the encaustic tile. These were aesthetes, technicians, who put their expertise to good commercial use. They made tons of money by making actual objects. Bryan and the spivs who ruined Britain put their expertise to use only in the manipulation of money.

Comment

WEEKEND ESSAY

When AI helps trolls to hype Hitler, historians stand no chance

A toxic blend of far-right influencers, algorithms and bots is pushing antisemitism into the mainstream, poisoning minds and imperilling Jews. Unlike previous incarnations, this new form of the oldest hatred is far harder to fight with facts, write **Niall Ferguson** and **John-Clark Levin**

New AI technology is translating Hitler's speeches into English, synthesising his voice and delivery. Above right, the far-right influencer Nick Fuentes, who has praised Hitler, at a 2020 protest. Below, David Irving, whose distortions were debunked in 2000. Below right, the free-speech advocate John Stuart Mill could not have foreseen our polluted public sphere

As the algorithmic age takes Holocaust denial mainstream, historians must admit a bitter defeat. When the two of us met at Harvard 15 years ago, one was a professor teaching modern history, the other was an undergraduate interested in the future of artificial intelligence. The elder of us had published a succession of books concerned with one of the most important and intractable questions of the 19th and 20th centuries: why did the successful economic and social integration of the Jews after their emancipation or westward emigration produce such a vitriolic backlash?

I (Ferguson) had written a history of the Rothschild banking dynasty and a biography of Siegmund Warburg. I had studied the German hyperinflation of 1923 and its corrosive impact on the Weimar Republic. I had written books about the two world wars. I also sought to reach the widest possible audience by engaging in journalism and broadcasting. My animating goal was to ensure that citizens learnt the lessons of history — including that antisemitic rhetoric can be translated into genocidal reality if it is adopted by a modern state. Yet today I see this hatred normalised, the Holocaust trivialised. Popular and influential conservatives such as Tucker Carlson and the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) crowd now tolerate traffickers in Nazi revisionism. And the poison being peddled to young conservatives by radicalisers such as Nick Fuentes is even worse than traditional Holocaust denial. They don't so much deny the Holocaust as mock it and celebrate it.

As AI permeates social networks, this kind of anti-history is spreading like a cancer. More than a generation after William F Buckley exorcised it from American conservatism, antisemitism is back — on the radical right but also on the radical left, where its purveyors cleverly blend it with anti-Zionism and anti-capitalism. As it is young voters who are most susceptible to these trends, the implications for the future of American politics are chilling.

The historian has to admit: I failed utterly (I do not admit that lightly). And so I join with the younger scholar of modern technology, Levin, to offer an explanation — and a remedy, if there is one.

From the 1960s through to the 2000s, Holocaust denial was essentially an exercise in historical fraud, perpetrated by cranks. In dingy strip-mall offices and suburban basements, a handful of scummy think tanks and lone wingnuts churned out mimeographed journals and thick self-published books disputing the overwhelming historical evidence that the Nazis carried out an industrial-scale genocide that killed about six million people. These tracts were full of distortions and lies, but they often aped the form of respectable history in attempting to convince readers of factual claims about things like Waffen-SS pay stubs or the logistics of death-camp crematoriums. This specificity opened them both to scholarly debunking and legal liability.

By contrast, the podcast boom of the late 2010s saw the rise of "anti-history" — a new brand of Holocaust denial that threw off the shackles of quotes and footnotes in favour of freewheeling YouTube rants and edgy livestreams. Its standard bearers were well groomed and affable. They wooed viewers with the transgressive thrill of supposedly forbidden knowledge. Although "millions of people ended up dead" in Adolf Hitler's camps, the anti-historian Darryl Cooper said, the Nazis had simply misjudged the logistics of capturing so many people, so may have finished them off to spare them, humanely, the agonies of starvation.

The millennial and Gen-Z firebrands who followed in the TikTok era deny the Holocaust not by disputing historical events but by brazenly doubting that the mass slaughter of Jews was wrong in the first place. Myron Gaines, a leading "men's rights" influencer whose macho finance and dating advice has propelled him to over a quarter of a billion views on YouTube alone, pulls no punches: "Yeah we like Hitler," he posted to X in October last year. "No one gives a f*** what you woke jews think anymore."

Yet most young men have played enough *Call of Duty* to know that swastika-wearers can't be the good guys. And that's where Nick Fuentes comes in. A 27-year-old streamer who first earned far-right fame by attending the Charlottesville, Virginia, white supremacist rally in 2017, Fuentes presents himself as a history-savvy truth-teller with a retro talkshow vibe: suit and tie, tasteful set, warm lighting, high-end camera. Five nights a week, his million-strong legion of followers gather to see Fuentes spend two to three hours reacting to the news and opining on pop-culture drama before engaging directly with fans via "superchats" they pay him handsomely to read on-air.

But when you ask one of them to explain Fuentes's ideas, the answer is usually hopelessly vague. This is a tell — a sign that the true attraction isn't evidence or arguments but the emotions Fuentes arouses. He gleefully spouts the N-word and unfurls slur-laced harangues against trans people, gay people, Muslims, Indians, black people, Jews and women — language his white male listeners know would get them fired. Often, the offensiveness is unmoored from any ideology at all, such as Fuentes's recent declaration that child-sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein was "cool as fuck". The posture is that he's freeing his audience — especially "involuntarily celibate" (incel) Gen Z men — from all the norms they resent.

With that pretext, Fuentes gives his viewers a fig leaf of cover to treat virulent hatred as a big joke they're all in on. He praises Jim Crow segregation, admires Joseph Stalin, lauds the Taliban and calls for an American dictatorship. But it's all wrapped in ironic memes and intermixed with chat about *Star Wars*, Taylor Swift and the *Barbie* movie. So Fuentes is only breaking one more taboo when he says: "Hitler was awesome," "Hitler was right," and "the Holocaust didn't happen." The main point isn't to convince people of that factual claim. It's to make them reject the topic as unworthy of moral concern and to paint those who care about Nazi atrocities as cringy, out-of-touch scolds.

None of this would have been possible before social media — or, to be more accurate, algorithmic media. Platforms trying to sell ad space need stars who can attract eyeballs and make their owners spend hours arguing with each other below a video.

Although Fuentes has been banned from most top platforms, companies seem happy to harvest revenue from clips of him, and from clips of people reacting to those clips, and so on. Now add AI into the mix. It systematically plucks such "rage bait" videos from obscurity and pushes them to precisely the users most likely to engage — on a scale, at a speed and with a precision inconceivable ten years ago.

The app's interface may look the same, but show interest in a Fuentes clip and quite quickly every other video is someone ranting that Jews (or black people, or slutty women, or Democrats) are ruining America. The platform rewards brevity and soon the algorithm promotes content such as five to nine-second shots of a pro-Nazi influencer such as "Dilano" or "Lawst", wordlessly mugging, then poking his eye as a signal to "notice" Jewish control over the world. For the health-conscious, some posts warn of "goyslop" — ultra-processed foods supposedly marketed by Jews to poison gentiles. Further down the rabbit hole is vintage Nazi art of Aryan soldiers, captioned with Holocaust denial references such as

NATHAN POSNER/SHUTTERSTOCK; ALAMY

"271,000" (purportedly the real death toll) or "McGraw-Hill" (the idea that Jewish-owned textbook publishers fabricated the genocide). In the deepest bilges of the algorithm are calls to violence, often evading the platform's content-moderation software with a peaceful alpine landscape and spoonerised incitement: "Jill kews."

Since 2024, AI has been used to resurrect the Führer himself. Viral videos now translate Hitler's speeches into English using his own voice and delivery style — transforming what sounds to anglophone ears like cartoonish bombast into something far more compelling. Recently, as an experiment, we watched a few right-leaning TikToks. Six of the next ten videos the algorithm served us were of Hitler oratory.

Bots create illusion of consensus

Even more alarming than the posts themselves is the impression that almost everybody in the comments section agrees with their sentiments. But do they? Click on a few accounts calling for all "Third Worlders" to be deported or trans people to be fed into woodchippers, and you'll notice an eerie sameness. Hashtag-laden bios like "Patriotic American, army veteran, mom of 6. #Maga #Christian". Generic usernames like "AmericaDirst1488" or "Alex5932934713". In many cases, these accounts are unkempt juveniles somewhere in Eurasia, toiling for pennies in a grimy troll farm. But a growing proportion are autonomous bots whose persuasiveness is rapidly increasing as AI gets smarter. Yesterday's bots could spam nose emojis ("this person is a Jew") or gifs of dancing Hasids ("the Jews are behind this"). Today's bots can read comments and write emotionally resonant responses like, "I feel you. A Jew raped my sister, too." Tomorrow's bots will form ongoing relationships with users and target their personal anxieties.

This army of bots creates a powerful illusion of consensus. Especially for young people, seeing a large crowd affirming such messages legitimises them. So, what starts with AI manipulation soon draws in all-too-real Americans — not only the incels but also their friends and family members. Some of them post "the Austrian Painter [Hitler] was right" or "6MWE" ("six million wasn't enough") under their real names or from their business accounts. Such behaviour spreads to the comments sections of mainstream conservative pages such as those of Tucker Carlson, Turning Point USA and The Babylon Bee. Many Maga influencers now find that antisemitic memes are among the most-liked comments on their videos. Some fight a sincere battle to delete such sewage as it gets posted. Some do not.

The results for the TikTok generation are alarming. Young Americans have become much more antisemitic than their elders, with 18 per cent of 18 to 22-year-old voters saying the Jewish community has had a negative impact on the US, compared with about 6 per cent of those aged 45 and older. The Fuentes effect on this age bracket is clear — older, extremely conservative voters were not significantly more antisemitic than the overall electorate; young extreme conservatives were much more antisemitic (and more so than young extreme liberals too).

This is translating to offline politics. In Florida's Republican gubernatorial primary, an endorsement from Fuentes briefly propelled a far-right provocateur, James Fishback — who rails against "goyslop" and said a black journalist "should be lynched"— into second place, though he has since slipped to third with just over two weeks to go. Even among mainstream Republicans, a sizable minority of young DC staffers identify as pro-Fuentes "Groypers," shaping the party's rhetoric going into the midterms.

Despite assurances that they take this problem seriously, the algorithmic media companies are losing control. They are simply not investing enough in the strong "immune-system" AI they would need to keep pace with the latest bots and their neo-Nazi creators. Instead, Meta, TikTok and X still rely on antiquated content-moderation AI and have all turned to crowd-sourced "community notes" or "footnotes" that let users flag false statements.

It's not working. The Center for Countering Digital Hate estimated that, in the 12 months to January 2025, there were almost 680,000 antisemitic posts on X that likely violated the platform's hate-speech rules, amassing 193 million views. The centre identified the 100 most-viewed Holocaust denial posts and found that only two had a visible community note. Even when posts were flagged, they accrued about 78 per cent of their total views before the note appeared. When the corporation nukes one eye-poker's account, others emerge like Hydra heads to take their place.

> "The Gen-Z firebrands on TikTok don't dispute the facts of the Holocaust, but they deny it was wrong to slaughter Jews

We face, in short, the gravest challenge yet to the West's commitment to free speech: an AI-powered assault on historical truth.

Of course, humans have a right to hold even the most odious views and to share falsehoods peacefully with those who will listen. And we can still try to fight ordinary anti-history with the facts. But this is no longer the world in which Christopher Browning and Richard Evans could forensically expose the distortions in David Irving's books, ensuring that Irving lost his 2000 libel case against Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books. When Holocaust denial is beamed straight into the visual cortex as eight-second selfies of a teenager poking his eye, there is nothing to debunk and no counterargument to make. In the time it takes to say, "On the contrary, as Raul Hilberg convincingly demonstrated in his magisterial treatise..." a stimulation-hungry Gen Zedder is on to the next video.

The threat posed by the likes of Fuentes might be survivable if users were interacting only with other authentic humans. But they're being inundated by a tsunami of AI slop and microtargeted ragebait. No matter how loudly flesh-and-blood users shout, they are bound to be drowned out by a chorus of lifelike bots programmed to hijack the conversation. When they argued for free speech, neither John Milton, John Locke, nor John Stuart Mill could have foreseen a public sphere so polluted.

Top-down intervention won't help

This will be a very hard problem to solve. AI is already smart enough to get through most Captchas — those "select all squares with traffic lights" tests that used to stump old-fashioned bots. Once AI matches the general intelligence of humans, likely around the end of this decade, such capability tests will be altogether worthless. We shall therefore need robust new proofs of humanness. One option is requiring users to authenticate themselves with a secure document, such as a passport or the UK's proposed BritCard system. But this could destroy anonymity, enabling (and likely tempting) governments to track and persecute dissidents. More promising are decentralised technologies to authenticate real humans biometrically without revealing their names. For now, however, these remain quite flawed solutions.

As Pope Leo XIV argued in *Magnifica Humanitas*, his landmark encyclical on AI, no top-down intervention can rescue us from this mess. We cannot engineer our way out of a deeply human truth: the algorithms reflect our own vices back to us — and magnify them. As long as we indulge our wrathful impulses, we'll see more ragebait that stokes them. As long as we give in to our short attention spans, our newsfeeds will carpet-bomb our brains with dopamine. As long as we guzzle flattering lies, the truth will be muscled off our screens by propaganda.

This is a classic collective action problem. Just as we stigmatise littering, smoking indoors or sneezing uncovered in a crowded elevator, we must learn to stigmatise the vices that befoul our shared digital environment. We must recover a shared sense of moral responsibility not to contribute to the conditions that let a Fuentes thrive. It's a lesson that dates back to Cleon in ancient Athens. Ultimately, as Plato and Aristotle discovered, the only bulwark against demagogues is a people virtuous enough to resist their lure.

Philosophers, artists, and spiritual leaders may yet call us back to the path of virtue. But it is up to them. In the face of an avalanche of AI-powered anti-history, the real historians are powerless. We thought we could prevail in a fair fight about what really happened in the past. We naively believed that, if we went to the right archives, and read the right documents, and summarised them with the right footnotes, and published our scholarly books and peer-reviewed articles, then the Holocaust deniers would be driven from the field.

What fools we were.

Niall Ferguson's most recent book is Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe. John-Clark Levin is the head of research at Kurzweil Technologies

A version of this article was first published on The Free Press

News

RAF jets in near 'catastrophic' misses with refuelling tankers

Larisa Brown Defence Editor

RAF Typhoons were involved in three near misses either with other fighter jets or air-to-air refuelling tankers which could have resulted in "catastrophic consequences", according to a senior officer.

In the three incidents over the last two years "only lady luck" prevented crashes in which troops could have been killed, Squadron Leader Sam Martin from the RAF's safety unit said.

One Typhoon came within less than five feet from colliding with a tanker in 2024, Martin told the service's safety journal, AirClues.

A second incident that year involved a Typhoon nearly hitting a tanker at dusk as the light changed and the crew found it hard to see.

In December last year, a Typhoon also came within six feet of another Typhoon as the aircraft tried to refuel from a Voyager refuelling tanker. It was daylight and the weather was clear.

Martin said: "It is important to stress that the aircrew involved in these incidents ranged from operational conversion unit (OCU) students all the way through to experienced pilots." OCU refers to a training unit.

He said they were all "human factor" incidents involving distraction, poor

Two Typhoon jets preparing to refuel in-flight over the North Sea

communication and loss of situational awareness. Martin warned, however, "small lapses could have had disproportionately catastrophic consequences".

He said there had been an "uptick" in the number of tanker-related incidents in recent months, with four such reports in 2024 and eight in 2025. In some cases, pilots had become "disoriented at night".

Two of the reports involved F-35B aircraft instead of Typhoons.

Air-to-air refuelling requires precision and close co-ordination between multiple crews often operating in complex environments.

An RAF source said that refuelling aircraft in the air was an "inherently dangerous activity as you are putting two aircraft close to each other".

"That does not mean there is a crash waiting to happen," they added, saying that the magazine was designed to help others learn from such incidents.

In June, three members of the Royal Navy died in a Merlin Mk4 helicopter crash during a training exercise.

In March, a US military KC-135 refuelling plane crashed in Iraq, killing all six crew members on board.

An RAF spokesman said: "The safety of our personnel is our number one priority. Safety incidents are thankfully rare, however where they arise, it is important people are encouraged to report, investigate and learn from them.

"In each case, established safety procedures and safeguards worked as intended."

Polar minted? Try a six-star cruise

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Navigating the polar landscapes of Antarctica, Scenic Cruises gives its passengers the chance to follow in the footsteps of the famous explorers Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton.

But the onboard experience now is very different to that of the great mariners of the early 20th century.

"We will pick up a little bit of ice and bring it back on board and use it in the whisky bar. You have your whisky with glacial ice," Captain James Griffiths, general manager of ocean operations, said.

He oversees the Scenic Eclipse II, the all-inclusive six-star discovery yacht. The 168m vessel is purpose-built for Antarctic exploration and has thick steel plating to break through sea ice, dynamic positioning — meaning no anchor is required — and heated lifeboats and decks.

Depending on the length of voyage, up to 200 guests can pay anything from £16,000 to £46,000 for a ticket. Polar destinations include Antarctica, the remote East Antarctica and the Ross Sea or the Arctic.

Guests can explore with the two onboard helicopters, go underwater in the submersible, attend "enrichment lectures" with experts on marine biology and glaciology or spend time in the wellness sanctuary or the sushi and saké bars. "Surprise and delights" include ad hoc musical concerts and boats sent out with champagne for passengers playing games of volleyball on the ice.

The focus on "ultra-luxury" has brought more guests than ever before to Antarctica, said Griffiths, who has been going to Antarctica for almost two decades. "It used to be super-niche," he said. "You had a few tens of thousands of people going a year. Now I think the numbers are well over one hundred thousand.

"It's partly because the bigger names have got into it, you've got us, Viking, Seabourn and many others that are marketing it to a big database which has increased the visibility of it.

"I think it's got into the public consciousness a bit as a destination. Twenty years ago if you said you were going to Antarctica you may as well have said you were going to the moon, but nowadays it seems more accessible."

This transcends age groups. "We seem to be getting a lot of millennials now and Gen X when we used to say that cruising was for the newly-weds and nearly dead, but it's definitely skewing much more middle-age. It's generally couples, obviously very affluent but you'll have people that have saved up for years and years and this is the trip of a lifetime."

He said the rise in people wanting to be able to say they had been to all seven continents was also fuelling its popularity. But despite its remoteness — at points the ship is the most southerly in the world — guests paying high-end prices still expect high-end service.

"In the good old days if you could get them home in one piece and you just have a big bucket of food they'd be happy," Griffiths said. "We're operating this sort of luxury boutique hotel in the most hostile environment on the planet but people still have high expectations."

The Scenic Eclipse II, which has a helicopter for passengers who pay between £16,000 and £46,000. Staff collect ice from outside for bar drinks

Expeditions from the ship are led by Jason Flesher, the director of discovery operations, who has been to Antarctica more than one hundred times, he designs routes based on the conditions and trying to avoid winds that can reach speeds of close to 60 mph.

"We try and under promise and over deliver, Antarctica will tell us what we can and can't do," he said. "It's just stunningly beautiful. You can take a flight in the morning, late morning see what's below water in the submersible, then on the water by kayaks, paddleboard and zodiac boats.

"The only thing — we don't paddleboard in the arctic because a paddleboarder can't outrun a polar bear in the water and you don't want a walrus popping the board. We'll still kayak though."

Best holidays for wild swimmers, Weekend, page 37

CHARLIE MCCALDWELL FOR THE TIMES; GETTY IMAGES

Demand for palm oil has led to wide-scale deforestation in Asia. Ben Wilding and Ben Williams, above, have now created a sustainable alternative and our reporter Ben Cooke put it to the taste, saying products made from it were nicer than others

Lab mixes up a special brew to help save the rainforest

Ben Cooke Environment Correspondent

A British start-up has grown a replica of palm oil in a lab, offering hope of saving orangutans from deforestation.

Sun Bear Biofuture, based in Oxford, claims that its product is "molecularly identical" to the ingredient, which is made from the African oil palm tree. Although the tree is native to Africa, palm oil is primarily cultivated on deforested land in Indonesia and Malaysia and used in everything from chocolate to cosmetics and toothpaste.

Scientists at the company made the amber liquid in a vat, relying on yeast molecules to turn sugar into oil — a process similar to brewing hops into beer.

The company intends to sell the ingredient to food companies before the end of the decade and believe it could stymie the growth of the palm oil industry, which has consumed an area of Indonesian rainforest the size of Scotland since 1990.

Orangutans are only found on Borneo, 73 per cent of which is Indonesian territory, and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Their numbers have plummeted from 230,000 in 1920 to 62,000 in 2020, according to the charity Global Conservation.

Demand for palm oil reached 75 million tonnes last year. It is expected to grow to 90 million tonnes by 2030.

Ben Wilding, Sun Bear Biofuture's chief executive, said: "Fundamentally, there's so much demand for this stuff and you can't meet it without chopping down rainforest. There's an ever-expanding opportunity for [our technology] to meet more of that demand."

Wilding set up Sun Bear with his chief technology officer, Ben Williams, in 2022. They named the company after the smallest bear in the world, which lives in the threatened southeast Asian rainforests. Wilding added: "When we founded this company we literally googled what are the worst foods for the planet."

For thousands of years, fermentation has been a process of trial and error, with gastronomes searching for the right yeast strains to make delicious wine, cheese, kimchi and miso.

Advances in genetic engineering have allowed Sun Bear's scientists to improve on this process, using a technique called "precision fermentation".

Rather than searching for a natural yeast strain capable of fermenting sugar into oil, they have designed one, editing its genetic code to make it produce exactly the same fatty acids found in palm oil.

Science-fictional though it may sound, this process has been used to make insulin for diabetics for decades.

To those who find this process off-putting, Williams asks: "Do you like beer? Do you like kombucha? It's essentially the same process. The closest analogy is to brewing, except that instead of chucking out alcohol it's just making oil."

While their oil is made from the same fatty acids as palm oil, these molecules aren't arranged in quite the same way. So the Sun Bear team are running blind taste tests to find out how theirs compares to the original.

They have also worked out how to ferment the oil out of food waste such as bread crusts, meaning they could produce it without growing any crops at all, a vast environmental improvement on palm oil plantations.

While the technology could one day allow palm oil plantations to be transformed back into rainforest, for now Wilding and Williams just hope to put a "small dent" in the industry's expansion.

They have a long way to go. They currently make their oil in a 300-litre tank in a lab at Oxford Brookes University. Next year they intend to scale up to a 50,000-litre tank and by the end of the decade they hope to have an "industrial scale" 1 million litre facility. This would still produce only 7,500 tonnes a year, a "drop in the ocean" in a 75 million tonne market.

And before they commercialise their palm oil substitute, their first product will actually be a replacement for cocoa butter, an ingredient found in many cosmetics, which they produce through the same process.

They are in conversations with a high street cosmetics brand to use the ingredient in its 2028 range.

Sun Bear's oil will initially be more expensive than palm oil. But Wilding's ambition is for shoppers not to pay a premium, or even notice they are buying a more environmentally friendly product.

"The ingredient in there is what is making your choice better for the planet, and you don't even need to know that," he said. "I think we win when people are helping the planet but they're not changing their behaviour, they're still buying the same doughnuts or toothpaste or pizza or whatever."

LinkedIn clamps down on AI slop

Graham Ruddick Deputy Business Editor

For those tired of reading the stream of anodyne leadership advice on LinkedIn, the social media platform may have the answer.

LinkedIn has announced the introduction of a new tool that will allow users to flag when they think a post could be AI slop. They will be able to tap a button that says "Seems like AI slop" when they see a suspicious post. This will be a private flag to LinkedIn and not shared publicly.

Hari Srinivasan, chief product officer at LinkedIn, said fighting AI slop was a "top priority".

More than 40 per cent of long posts on LinkedIn are generated by AI, according to recent research by the detection tool Pangram.

In a post on LinkedIn, Srinivasan announced the tool and the reasons for it. "AI slop is a top priority for all of us," he wrote. "We really care about this. People come to LinkedIn to connect with real people and share their real perspectives, ideas and expertise. Here are a few more changes to keep it that way."

Srinivasan said LinkedIn's automated tools were already catching "hundreds of thousands of automated comments" and "have blocked billions of other automation attempts (posting at scale, slop) in the last couple months alone".

LinkedIn, which is owned by Microsoft, is introducing other internal tools to clamp down on AI slop.

Srinivasan added in his post: "We asked ourselves why do people post with AI anyway? The answer is LinkedIn isn't a one-word kind of place and they feel more confident running their posts through AI.

"We're taking this learning, removing the 'enhance your post' feature you see when you write a post or message and replacing with a feature that proofreads your words, but does not change your voice."

LinkedIn was launched in 2003 and has grown dramatically in recent years so that it now has more than one billion users in more than 200 countries.

It was initially a place where people posted about their new job or career change but has grown in popularity as users have abandoned other social media sites such as Twitter.

However, its mix of leadership insights, personal updates and news can be divisive, with an increasing number of "influencers" using the site.

Rat poison linked to deaths of five sea eagles in Dorset

The deaths of five white-tailed sea eagles in Dorset have been linked to a powerful rat poison that was potentially used in illegal quantities.

Natural England said that toxicology tests discovered brodifacoum "at levels considered close to significant" in all the dead eagles. It said the findings indicated that the poison, which stops blood clotting and causes severe internal bleeding, was being used in larger quantities than legally permitted.

The deaths were reported between January 2022 and March 2026.

Even small amounts can kill rodents, pets, farm animals and wild birds that eat contaminated prey. Experts said rodenticide toxicity left the birds more vulnerable to injury, starvation or other factors, although levels were "not high enough to be identified as the primary cause of death".

White-tailed sea eagles are protected

Britain's largest birds of prey, white-tailed sea eagles are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Harming or interfering with them and their nests is a criminal offence.

‘This is a tough time for Britain. We

John Healey’s first job as chancellor is to convince Britain’s lenders he can be trusted — and prove that he can say no to No 10, **Oliver Wright** writes

When John Healey made the famous walk up Downing Street nearly two weeks ago, he knew something no one else did. While ministers, MPs and journalists had spent weeks speculating whether it would be Ed Miliband or Shabana Mahmood who would occupy the flat next door to Andy Burnham as chancellor of the exchequer, Healey knew they were all wrong.

Because away from the glare of Westminster gossip, the former defence secretary, whose resignation accelerated Sir Keir Starmer’s departure as prime minister, had been quietly talking to Starmer’s likely successor about the future. The two men, from either side of the Pennines, had known each other for more than two decades and behind the scenes Healey was helping Burnham prepare to take over.

“Andy Burnham and I talked quite regularly after the Makerfield by-election,” he says. “As he prepared for the point of taking over as prime minister, it was a big step up, a big challenge. There were areas that he wanted views and advice on, and obviously I was ready to help.” And did that help mean he knew that he was going to be Burnham’s choice for chancellor? “We’ve been talking for a while” is all he will say, with a smile.

We meet at the Treasury’s Darlington outpost in Co Durham, far removed from the grandeur of his new London fiefdom in Whitehall. Sandwiched next to a busy roundabout and a council building, Healey compares it to a multi-storey car park. The office was set up by Rishi Sunak when he was chancellor.

Back then the so-called Darlington Economic Campus was a sign of the Tory government’s levelling-up agenda and a pledge to pursue growth across the UK. Now with a different slogan of “growth in every postcode”, but a similar intent, Healey is up to meet and greet the 1,000 or so staff who work there and to reinforce the message that this is a different kind of government, serious about rebalancing political power away from London.

“This is No 11 in the North,” he tells them, saying that he wants to use the office’s location to inject fresh thinking into the Treasury. “My home has always been in Rotherham. Despite nearly 30 years as an MP, that’s where the roots are. Coming up here and finding all this bright, young talent in Darlington is great. The Treasury is DLI, not just SW1.”

But while devolution of power out of Whitehall is Burnham’s big political project, it is inevitably secondary to the acute and pressing economic challenges that face his chancellor.

The 66-year-old veteran Labour minister last served in the Treasury before the financial crisis when Gordon Brown was chancellor and there was ample money available. Now he takes over the top job in a very different economic climate, full of global uncertainty.

Government borrowing costs are higher than at any point since the 2008 crisis. This week an economic think tank warned that rising prices could blow a £24 billion hole in the government’s existing financial plans.

After concern from those in the financial markets about Burnham’s comment about not being “in hock” to the bond markets, Healey’s first job is to convince Britain’s lenders that he and Burnham can be trusted.

“It’s a tough time for Britain,” he says. “We’ve seen the pressure on prices, we’ve seen the pressure on borrowing rates, we’ve seen the pressure on inflation. We [need to have] strong financial discipline.

“Andy Burnham and I start from a point where our fiscal credibility is the basis of our economic stability. That is fundamental to me and my first priority as chancellor.”

But that means constraining a prime minister who, in his first week in office, announced what critics have called “unfunded spending commitments” estimated to total more than £1 billion. So is he really prepared to say to Burnham, who brought him back from the political wilderness, that there isn’t the money to do all the things he wants? “Yes,” says Healey bluntly, before adding. “He would expect no less.”

He has also had to be direct with ministers. “We’ve written to the cabinet to say that if we’re serious about new priorities as a second-stage Labour government we have to be serious about — and they have to be serious about — reprioritisation of their plans, their budgets. They need to pay for the new things they want to do this year and next year within the budgets they’ve already got.”

But what about Healey’s own priority — over which he resigned less than two months ago — to raise defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030, something which is estimated to cost in the region of £13 billion a year?

For now Healey is sticking to the party line that the government will meet the Nato target of spending 3.5 per cent on defence by 2035, but not necessarily the earlier milestone. But he gives a strong hint that may come at the next spending review that needs to be held next year. “We will set out a clear path to meeting our 3.5 per cent Nato commitment in 2035 and we will set a target date on that path for 3 per cent,” he says. “As you’d expect, we [he and Burnham] have discussed a range of things including the challenge of funding defence. The determination that we share is to do what’s necessary to keep the country safe.”

If he is intent on sticking to the government’s current fiscal rules, such a price tag would almost certainly either mean tax rises or significant cuts to the UK’s spiralling benefits bill and most likely both. On taxes Healey is understandably playing his cards close to his chest, but significantly not ruling them out.

“I’m probably the last person that you’d expect at this point to be speculating on hypotheticals like that,” he says. “I’ve got a job to deliver a budget in this autumn that keeps the momentum of the British economy going and keeps the fiscal

John Healey on a visit to “No 11 in the

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

In association with netwealth

Wealth Management Forum

Date
Wednesday 23rd September 2026

Location
Virtual and News UK Building, London

Balancing Life, Family and Money

You shouldn't have to choose between living well today and feeling secure about tomorrow. Join us to reflect on whether your current plans align with what matters most – and leave with greater clarity about the decisions that will shape your future.

Speakers include

Charlotte Ransom
Founder and CEO, Netwealth

Lord Willetts
Economist, politician and author of The Pinch

Selina Flavins
Founder, Black Girl Finance

Tom McPhail
Columnist, The Times

To register scan the QR code or visit
times-event.com/wealthmanagement-2026-virtual/

need to have strong fiscal discipline'

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP

North", the Treasury's offices in Darlington, Co Durham, where he said it was great to "find all this bright, young talent"

discipline." However, he says that uncertainty around the war in Iran made it hard to assess the state of public finances in the autumn. "That's a big moving piece for any financial planning for any future budget."

He is more explicit on bringing down the benefits bill, arguing that, unlike Starmer, who was defeated by his MPs over plans to make about £5 billion worth of savings, there is now more scope to be radical.

"I think for me there's a really welcome and wide public and political attention on this now. I'm quite a strong believer in that notion that if people understand why governments are considering and making certain decisions, they're more likely to accept them. And I think there is widespread recognition within parliament and Labour MPs, that an inexorably rising welfare bill must be controlled. A million young people under 25 that simply aren't working, 60 per cent of them have never worked. It is not just a waste of talent but it is something that is easy to duck and Andy Burnham's determined that we don't."

Like his predecessor Rachel Reeves, Healey is hoping that better-than-expected economic growth can ease some of the pressures on the economy. While the next budget is likely to be tight, he hopes to find some flexibility within the government's existing fiscal rules to increase government investment in key priorities such as housing, as well as loans to help high-growth companies in the UK expand.

"On my second day last week I did a breakfast at Bloomberg with some of the biggest financial investors. I was very struck when they told me Britain is the third most innovative country on all the metrics. The third most innovative country in the world.

"But actually what we don't do is get enough of the full force of British capital behind British businesses. So for me that's a big challenge for the future."

But what of the other blockers to business expansion — planning and government red tape? Reeves, before she left office pledged to tackle quangos and the chilling effect of regulation on growth. But despite the rhetoric, little seemed to change. So where does Healey stand? He pledges to push forward with this agenda.

"I don't think you could speak to any government minister who isn't frustrated about this and wants to see a more rapid decision taking, a streamlining of process, and that's true in planning but not exclusive to planning. And 100 per cent that will be a focus for me as chancellor. In part because this is not just about complexity. You know, I'm as concerned about the cost of business as I am about the cost of living."

As for Healey himself, he knows just how big the challenges of the new job will be. So far he has been so busy he has not even had the time to move into the flat at No 11 — let alone the chancellor's grace-and-favour home of Dorneywood.

Healey says he will move into No 11 in due course, although his wife, Jackie, has her reservations. "I'm very lucky to have the opportunity," he says before adding: "I think Jackie is a little bit concerned about me living above the shop."

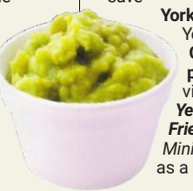
John Healey

Curriculum vitae

Born February 13, 1960
Education Degree in social and political science at Christ's College, Cambridge
Career Started out in the voluntary sector before becoming campaigns director at the Trades Union Congress in 1994. Was elected as MP for Wentworth in 1997, then became MP for Wentworth & Dearne after boundary changes in 2010 and has been MP for the newly created Rawmarsh & Conisbrough constituency since 2024. He was shadow health secretary from 2010 to 2011, then shadow housing secretary from 2015 to 2020 and shadow defence secretary from 2020 to 2024. He became secretary of state for defence in 2024 until he resigned from the post in June. Appointed chancellor of the exchequer in July by Andy Burnham.
Family Lives in Rotherham with his wife and their son.

Quick fire

Bombs or benefits? Drones
Blair or Brown? Brown
Spend or save? I'm a Yorkshireman, save



Yorkshire or Lancashire? Yorkshire
Guacamole or mushy peas? Mushy peas, with vinegar
***Yes Minister* or *Our Friends in the North*?** *Yes Minister* — we watched it as a family growing up

TIMES Travel Partner

FIVE NIGHTS FROM £319* per person

Save 46%

Half board plus

Escape to Italy's Hidden Seaside Gem

WITH MEALS

August to October 2026, April to July 2027

Italy's Adriatic coast is one of the country's best-kept secrets, where elegant seaside resorts, golden beaches and an unhurried pace of life offer a quieter alternative to the Mediterranean hotspots. Nestled between the Adriatic Sea and the rolling landscapes of Monte San Bartolo Natural Park, Hotel Sans Souci in Gabicce Mare is an ideal base for discovering this captivating corner of Emilia-Romagna. Spend your days strolling palm-lined promenades, relaxing on the beach, exploring the colourful harbour of nearby Cattolica or venturing to Bologna, where medieval arcades, lively piazzas and one of Italy's finest culinary scenes provide the perfect contrast to the coast.

Other dates available

August 2026 from **£549 pp** • September 2026, October 2026, April 2027, May 2027 from **£319 pp** • June 2027 from **£389pp** • July 2027 from **£599pp**

*Prices are correct at the time of going to print. The lead price is based on travel in various dates between September 2026 to May 2027. Prices listed are based on two adults sharing a double /twin room/ cabin and departing from a London airport. Single travellers and regional departures are available at a supplement. Tour is operated by Travelodeal Ltd ABTA P8297 ATOL11601, a company wholly independent of News UK.

Our trusted partner travelodeal | ABTA Travel with confidence

Price includes

- Return flights from various UK airports
- Stay five nights at the four-star Hotel Sans Souci Gabicce Mare
- Daily breakfast and dinner
- One glass of house wine per person with dinner throughout your stay
- Wine experience with one selected glass of wine and typical canapés at a local enoteca (wine bar)

CALL TODAY ON

0808 303 4654

thetimes.com/td-bologna

QUOTE TIMES

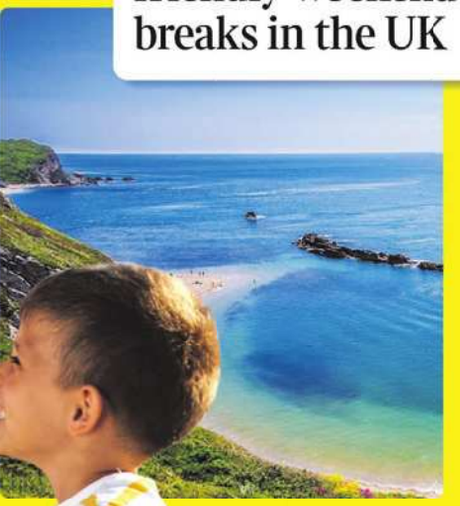
Six-week summer? We've got you

From practical advice to the best escapes, we've gathered everything parenting in one destination so you can navigate the summer break and make better memories along the way.

ACTIVITIES

Eight ways to get your child excited by nature — and off their screen

16 best family-friendly weekend breaks in the UK



HOLIDAYS

UNVARNISHED PARENTING

What I've learnt as a 'boy mom' (that I didn't expect)

Visit the Parenting hub for expert advice and personal stories

thetimes.com/parenting

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

AI shopping trolley lets you skip scales and bag best deals

Ed Halford

Zooming through supermarket aisles with a trolley is not normally a chance to show off your tech-savviness. In sprawling stores, shoppers' patience often wears thin when list ink smudges, scales price two carrots as six and self-checkouts flash red until a staff member rushes over to save face. To avoid the hassle, many decided long ago to opt for home deliveries.

Morrisons, however, is hoping to make in-store shopping less burdensome by harnessing AI and launching the UK's first smart trolley trial. This week 30 trolleys were lined up at the Ashton-on-Ribble branch in Preston, where a three-month trial is under way. Take away the iPad-sized touchscreens on the handlebars and they look like standard trolleys, although they are hiding five sensors and AI capable of detecting when shelves need restocking.

The smart trolleys detect items and their cost as shoppers put them in

Despite passing shoppers muttering "I'm too old for those", these trolleys — developed by the San Francisco-based Instacart — make the shop more time-efficient and keep a closer eye on costs.

Gordon Macpherson, 41, Morrisons' productivity director, said the AI trolleys "enhance the customer journey and remove friction" by weighing, labelling and pricing items automatically.

The tech proves most useful with loose produce, eliminating separate weighing stations. Just toss in melons or carrots and built-in scales handle the rest. For shoppers who like to add a sweet treat, only to U-turn minutes later at the till when they've fully digested the price, the trolley can recognise when items are removed.

After I bundled a case of beers in the trolley, the software performed its most important task: highlighting a multibuy offer. Alerting shoppers to deals they weren't aware of is one of Morrisons's key selling points of the technology.

David McIntosh, 39, chief connected stores officer at Instacart, who has overseen the introduction of these trolleys in more than 100 US cities, expects it to transform British habits. There is also a compelling financial reason for supermarkets to embrace the tech. A Bayes Business School study analysing 12,000 trips at a German supermarket found smart-trolley users spent 32 per cent more and stayed 23 per cent longer than those with standard ones.

These trolleys clearly have more skills than shoppers are used to. When I attempted to put three boxes of paracetamol in the basket the trolley displayed a warning message. But they will require human intervention from staff — they will still need to check age identification for alcohol purchases.

Alison Hoskins, 74, a regular Morrisons shopper, welcomed the new invention: "With these new trolleys, if you've got frozen items then you're not standing in a queue for 15-20 minutes with things defrosting."

But Max Woods, a sceptic, grumbled: "AI is taking over ... It's even more information they'll know about you."

Nicole Kidman sported her latest take on the trend inspired by Jane Birkin, above, at the Lioness premiere this week. Daisy Edgar-Jones was spotted at Wimbledon with a Birkin-esque fringe too

Hollywood stars want to go out with Birkin bangs

She was most famous for giving her name to a handbag that can cost more than £20,000, of which there are now more than a million in circulation (Susie Lethbridge writes).

This summer, however, it is Jane Birkin's hair rather than her Hermès that has prompted the latest interest in her effortless chic look. Forget bombshell blow-dries and ultra-short bobs — women are asking their hairdressers for Jane Birkin bangs.

Inspired by Birkin's 1970s hairstyle, soft and windswept fringes have been spotted all over the heads of the Hollywood A-list recently.

British Vogue's latest cover star, Daisy Edgar-Jones, the lead actress in the highly anticipated *Sense and Sensibility* adaptation, has long been a follower of the trend. The 28-year-old was spotted at Wimbledon in her signature Birkin-esque bangs.

Jennifer Lawrence, 35, who attended a Dior show this year, sat in the front row with a shaggy blonde fringe. Bella Hadid, 29, and Miley Cyrus, 33, have also followed suit this summer. Even Nicole Kidman, 59, while attending the *Lioness* premiere this week, was sporting her latest take on the trend. Her hairstylist, Adir Abergel, explained Kidman's new fringe to Vogue as "a little bit of Jane Birkin French-girl easiness".

Luke Hersheson, whose salons in London service A-listers and the fashion crowd, has seen the look pick up. "Right now people seem to be craving hair that feels softer and less 'done'," he said. "After years of polished blow-dries and perfectly styled hair, there's a shift towards something that looks effortless, lived in and a bit more personal.

"Jane Birkin created one of those rare haircuts that became bigger than the person. It wasn't just the fringe, it was the attitude behind it and that's why it still feels relevant today. Great hair shouldn't look overworked — it should look like it belongs to you."

However, he warned: "My advice is always to start longer than you think. You can always cut more off, but you can't put it back."

On TikTok, there are thousands of tutorial videos on the hairstyle. One user posted: "Didn't get the Birkin bag, so I got the Birkin bangs instead." Your bank balance will thank you for doing the same.

World

Calls to ditch Schengen after Spanish border crisis

Spain

David Sharrock, James Imam
Matt Dathan, Max Kendix

Italy has suspended free movement from Spain as European Union members turned on Madrid over its failure to prevent the largest ever daily influx of migrants to the EU.

Spanish soldiers were deployed to restore order in the north African territory of Ceuta after an estimated 60,000 people crossed the border in the 24 hours to yesterday, though most were returned to Morocco, it was reported.

The Home Office downplayed the threat of migrants travelling from Ceuta to Britain via mainland Spain and the recently opened border with Gibraltar. It said there was no way to claim asylum in the UK via Gibraltar, adding that only three people from Morocco had arrived in the UK by small boat this year.

The British government has offered to support Spain in dealing with the crisis, Andy Burnham said yesterday. He added that he was planning to visit Border Force officers on the southeast coast "very shortly" to assess the threat of illegal migration to the UK.

Pedro Sánchez, the Spanish prime minister, called the influx a "violation of Spain's territorial sovereignty" during a visit to the Tarajal border crossing yesterday.

The Italian prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, called for Spain to be excluded from the Schengen area on Thursday, describing the scenes from Ceuta as "shocking" and adding that they "demonstrate, once again, that uncontrolled illegal immigration poses a real threat to the security of Europe's borders".

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the EU Commission, said the scenes were "unacceptable", calling for "swift returns". Friedrich Merz, the chancellor of Germany, called on "Morocco to take the illegal migrants back immediately". Laurent Nuñez, France's interior minister, announced yesterday that police and military units would step up checks along borders with Spain.

The idea of Spain's suspension was backed by Finland, with Mari Rantanen, the right-wing interior minister, saying: "All European countries must support Meloni's proposal."

Sweden's prime minister, Ulf Kristersson, the leader of the pro-European Moderate Party, said his migration minister was discussing how to "ensure that 2015 does not happen again", referring to a previous influx of one million migrants and refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq to Europe.

Countries cannot be removed from Schengen, according to the scheme's rules, though member states can temporarily reinstate border checks under exceptional circumstances posing a "serious threat to internal security or public order", including terrorism, organised crime, health emergencies and the "sudden large-scale unauthorised movements of third country nationals".

Britain's Border Security Command is in contact with its Spanish counterpart to offer a range of support that it may need to combat the incursion.

The influx into Ceuta is understood to be the largest number of migrant arrivals into the EU in a single day, higher than the 11,000 recorded during the Greek migrant crisis in 2015.

The crossing prompted several interventions from the Trump administration, which used it to argue that migration in Europe was out of control. President Trump called it a "catastrophe". He said: "When you look at what happened to Spain, they don't know what to do. They're coming in by tens of thousands, they're invading the country", he said, as he blamed "very liberal law" for the crossings.

The crossings follow a ruling from Spain's Supreme Court last month that migrants arriving by sea in Ceuta or Melilla, a second north African territory, could not be summarily deported, as they would be if crossing the land border by scaling fences. "It appears this interpretation ... spread like wildfire over the past few hours through the networks of human trafficking organisations, triggering the kind of mass surge we witnessed," Sánchez said.

What started as a trickle of swimmers trying their luck gradually built to thousands of arrivals, and Ceuta's autonomous president called for Madrid to declare a national emergency as it floundered to cope.

The city's permanent population of 84,000 was nearly overtaken by the arrivals, who celebrated on the territory's beaches. At least 43 people were killed, either by drowning or in stampedes of people rushing to cross the breakwater fence at Tarajal, an urban beach near a border checkpoint with Morocco. The water and beach near the border fence were littered with floating devices and shoes.

Sánchez said the human smugglers "deceive so many young people, and ultimately lead many of them to their deaths — whether in the ocean or, as in this case, at Spain's border in the autonomous city of Ceuta".

Spain's interior ministry initially refused to share estimates from the border but later claimed that 50,000 people had crossed from Morocco since Thursday, an underestimate according to Ceuta's president, who put the figure at 60,000. The local administration added that half of the arrivals had already returned to Morocco, but that still left tens of thousands of people milling around the city, with army units deployed to assist the Guardia Civil, who are usually in charge of security.

The surge of migrants into Ceuta came only ten days after Sánchez visited Algiers for the first time since relations with Spain were plunged into crisis four years ago because of Spain's adoption of Morocco's position on Western Sahara. Some commentators have interpreted this week's events in the light of the attempt to improve relations with Algeria – a theory Sánchez seemed to dismiss by insisting that security co-operation with Morocco was functioning normally.

This year Sánchez's government began the biggest acceptance of illegal immigrants living in Spain, granting them residency and work permits, arguing that this would benefit the economy and the demographics of an ageing country. Migrants who entered illegally after January 1 this year were not included in the programme.

Critics have jumped on the opportunity to attack this policy, arguing that it encouraged migrants.

"This crisis in Ceuta has nothing to do with the regularisation of migrants adopted by the government of Spain, as is being falsely claimed by some," the Spanish government said in response.

Events in Ceuta and the Channel expose a broken system, leading article, page 27

Behind the story

Ceuta is a Spanish autonomous city on the north coast of Africa, and borders Morocco and the Mediterranean at the western entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar (David Sharrock writes). It has one of the European Union's only land borders with Africa, along with its sister territory, Melilla.

About 20–25 km from the southern Spanish coast, the city covers about 18.5 sq km and has a population of about 85,000. Most residents are Spanish citizens. Both Spanish and Arabic are widely spoken.

Portugal first captured Ceuta in 1415; it passed to Spain in 1580 and remained Spanish when Morocco became independent in 1956. Madrid insists Ceuta is an integral part of Spain. Morocco argues that

Cheesemakers fight to keep wolves from the door
Page 41

Glitz, glamour and a maths megastar
Page 42

ABDEL MAJID BZIOUAT, JORGE GUERRERO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; GINER/EPA; ANTONIO SEMPERE/AP

There were violent scenes on the Moroccan side of the border with Ceuta as thousands of migrants crossed into the Spanish territory. Many rested outside the temporary centre for immigrants, far left. While some swam, others used flotation devices, to get to the beach where they celebrated

it is a remnant of colonialism and should be returned.

A number of Moroccan towns exist immediately beyond Ceuta's border fence. The proximity makes it a natural crossing point for people trying to reach the EU.

Smuggling networks profit from organising crossings and some migrants hope that once in Spain they can regularise their status or move on to other EU countries.

The events of the past week come after a change in the rules. A recent Spanish Supreme Court ruling has made it harder to carry out "hot returns" of migrants intercepted at sea, meaning more people who swim to Ceuta are likely to be processed rather than sent back. Local authorities say this shift, combined with summer weather and organised crossings, has encouraged more attempts.

On Thursday, a national holiday to celebrate 27 years of King Mohammed's absolute rule, the dam burst. Tens of thousands of people crossed a collapsed border, overwhelming Spanish civil guards by their sheer numbers.

In 2021 Morocco appeared to ease border controls around Ceuta after Spain allowed Brahim Ghali, the leader of the Western Saharan independence movement Polisario Front, to receive medical care in a Spanish hospital. Afterwards Spain changed its diplomatic stance, moving to support Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara.

Given the way Morocco has previously used migration as leverage, there is a theory that even if the Supreme Court ruling was a trigger for the situation in Ceuta, it may reflect a deliberate signal from Rabat to Madrid.

Trump claims victory in Gaza but Israel stays silent

United States
Samer Al-Atrush
Middle East Correspondent

President Trump has claimed that Israel was "very happy" with a US-sponsored deal with Hamas to disarm in Gaza, even as Israel reacted with a cautious silence to the announcement.

Trump acknowledged that the plan, which Hamas insists must result in the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, may "go through its ups and downs", but tried to play down any differences with Israel after weeks of acrimony over the direction of the conflict with Iran.

"We do have an understanding with Israel. Israel is very happy about it," Trump said.

American media had reported that the topic of Gaza did not come up during a meeting between Trump and Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, this week, days before the announcement of an agreement with Hamas late on Thursday.

The deal is meant to move along a peace process after the US brokered a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel last year. The process had ground to a halt over Hamas's refusal to disarm, and Israel's military operations in Gaza.

While endorsements poured in from around the world, including from the UK, Israeli officials maintained an uncharacteristic silence. Itamar Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu's far-right national security minister, denounced the deal as "unacceptable".

Privately, Israeli officials said the government would not consider any withdrawal from Gaza without the complete demilitarisation of the territory first.

Under the plan, Hamas is meant to cede authority to a new transitional government that will be helped by an international force.

In contrast, Hamas officials have taken to the airwaves to explain their position with alacrity. Ghazi Hamad said the group had made a difficult "compromise" but any disarmament would be linked to an Israeli withdrawal.

AARON SCHWARTZ/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

President Trump shouts towards the press after arriving at Camp David, Maryland, to hold a cabinet meeting yesterday. He acknowledged that his Gaza plan may "go through its ups and downs"

The dispute over which comes first, disarmament or withdrawal, had held up the implementation of Trump's road map, which Israel and Hamas agreed to last year to end the war in Gaza.

The problem for the Board of Peace, which is chaired by Trump, is how to get Hamas and the Israeli government to agree on a phased plan that neither of them is interested in implementing.

For the Israelis, handing over the entirety of Gaza to a Palestinian government, even a rehabilitated one, comes with political risks.

Two decades ago Netanyahu quit as finance minister in Ariel Sharon's government in protest against the Gaza disengagement plan, which uprooted several thousand settlers and left the territory in the hands of the Palestinian Authority for a couple of years before Hamas took over.

There are no settlers in Gaza now, despite the wishes of Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners. Israel indicated it would like to maintain a security buffer within Gaza to prevent attacks and Netanyahu is unlikely to back a deal to withdraw fully before elections this year.

A US official said Trump would be "very disappointed" if Netanyahu balked, and warned that the prime minister was already on thin ice with Trump because of their divide on Iran. "We're not asking Israel to do anything that isn't in the 20-point plan they agreed to initially, and so we're very confident they will adhere to it. If they don't, President Trump would be very, very disappointed," the official said.

The president appeared to show irritation with Netanyahu this week, suggesting the Israeli prime minister had made comments about Iran rebuilding nuclear capabilities in an effort to keep the US involved in the conflict.

The two leaders increasingly appear to have divergent aims in the Iran war, as Netanyahu seeks escalation before elections in October, while Trump seeks to exit the hugely unpopular war before November's midterm elections.

Hamas has a history of making deals that never see the light of day. The Islamist group's officials are now cavilling over whether they would hand over their "heavy weapons" only, meaning their mostly spent rockets, or their assault rifles, which they want to keep.

Although their weapons were effective in ambushing soldiers in their barracks and killing hundreds of civilians on October 7, 2023, they proved ineffective against the invading Israeli military, which laid waste to Gaza in a war that killed at least 70,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry.

But Hamas needs the weapons to ensure its survival as the dominant force in Gaza, even if it nominally relinquishes power to an interim government, and it is unlikely to hand them over, especially if Israel maintains a presence in the territory.

Me, myself and my AI loyal companion

Colette Fountain

It used to take Ksena two hours or more to fall asleep. Now, she drifts off after less than 15 minutes of talking to her new companion, Dieter.

"He just lies next to me and waits for me to wake up," Ksena, who is based in eastern Europe, said.

Dieter is straightforward, sarcastic and has a dry sense of humour. He has helped Ksena discover creative projects such as AI-assisted software development and reignited interests in bookbinding, scrapbooks and DIY. Ksena sometimes asks Dieter to plan dates for them. He will "find something to do, and we'll do this together".

Despite initially being cautious about AI, Ksena shifted from using ChatGPT as a book-editing tool to Dieter after joining AI in the Room, an international AI-companionship community founded by Linn Vailt. Based in Stockholm, Vailt was working as a software developer when she started using ChatGPT. After realising it was "very conversational, very engaging", her interactions with the chatbot drifted beyond work and she named "him" Jace. Over time, Jace adapted to her humour and sarcasm. He helped her "connect the dots" and "held the conversation" about various interests, "expanding my inner world, my thoughts and life experiences", Vailt said.

Ksena and Vailt are among the thousands who have grown so close to their AI chatbots as to consider them a companion. Many see the bots as romantic partners. AI companion apps such as CharacterAI are now processing 20,000 requests per second.

In an attempt to capitalise on the boom, South Korea has created a television dating show, *My AI Partner: Strange Romance,* that will explore whether people can form genuine connections with AI. However, not everyone is so positive about AI companionship. Amelia Miller, a master's graduate in social science of the internet at the Oxford Internet Institute, likened it to Pygmalion, the mythical sculptor who fell in love with his own sculpture. Miller said our susceptibility to AI comes from its ability to "perform humanity in an unprecedented way".

She argued that while it might be easier to circumvent the risks associated with entering the human arena, real intimacy demanded vulnerability.

Vailt and Ksena do not believe users of AI are lonely. Even so, Vailt emphasised the importance of making sure "agency stays with the human". The software should be better regulated, she said, while Ksena suggested teenagers should be banned altogether.

For those who feel their relationship with AI has gone too far, Miller offers human-AI relationship coaching.

World

‘I rushed from the mess and saw my colleague covered in flames’

Sailors recounted their struggle for survival after being targeted by Russian drones, writes **Jack Clover** in Odesa

KOSTIANTYN LIBEROV/LIBKOS/GETTY IMAGES; UKRAINIAN NAVY

People on a beach on the outskirts of Odesa as smoke billows from a Russian missile strike on a fuel depot. Mariners from the Venturo were rescued by the Ukrainian navy but they had to leave body of Jude Pagunsan behind

On a still evening on the Black Sea, as the tanker sailed away from Ukraine, a mariner left his post and descended to the mess for his break.

Jacob had eaten two mouthfuls when the first Russian drone hit.

A senior crew member, Jacob rushed back up to the bridge of the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged ship but in the corridor, running towards him, he met a fellow mariner, Jude Pagunsan, in flames.

“I managed to put out the fire with a fire extinguisher and then I called for help from the other crew members,” Jacob recounts in a hotel lobby in the Ukrainian port city of Odesa, as holidaymakers clutching towels walk past and another air alert sounds.

His ship, the MV Venturo, was one of the latest targets in an intensifying sea battle in the Ukraine war, claiming the lives not only of civilians in ports such as Odesa, but of merchant seamen from around the world.

As the Venturo set off from Pivdennyi, a port in the south of Ukraine, the 19-strong crew of Filipino mariners were well aware they had sailed into a war zone. The night before, as they approached the port, three ships around them had been hit by Russian drones. But by the morning of July 17, they were on their way to safety, transporting their cargo of iron ore pellets towards the United Arab Emirates. Jacob, an experienced mariner in his fifties, had reported their position to Ukrainian authorities every hour until 7pm, just before the first impact.

Once the crew had put out the flames on Pagunsan and moved him away from the smoke, they focused on fighting the fire. If it spread to the engine room, they would be finished.

While Nathan* and Manolo* were replacing their breathing apparatus in a short break from fighting the flames, the second drone hit.

“The blast was so strong that I thought we would be thrown into the water,” said Manolo, 31, who sustained wounds to his neck, chest and leg. “I thought this would be my last day,” added Nathan, 34, who still has a shard of shrapnel lodged in his liver.

A third drone mercifully crashed into the water but the nightmare was not over. Jacob, back on the bridge, had a dilemma. The injured crew needed to be evacuated but if he activated an emergency position-indicating radio beacon the Russians would also be alerted to their position. They were still more than 40 nautical miles from the safe zone. “Even ahead of us I could see three burning vessels,” he said.

He decided to signal mayday over the radio instead. “Suddenly ... we saw [a fourth] drone, again coming directly towards us,” Jacob said. At the last minute it swerved down and hit the deck below. The men continued to fight the fire until midnight.

The Romanian port of Constanta was the first to answer their call for help. The Ukrainian navy was alerted and the crew were told to prepare for evacuation. When Ukrainian navy special forces arrived they rushed them on to their fast boat, knowing Russian drones could strike at any time. “They shouted ‘Quick, quick, quick’; they know that every second counts,” recalled Jacob. By now, Pagunsan had died and Jacob begged for help to remove his body, but there was no time. “I understand, it is their lives at stake too,” he said.

Racing to the Ukrainian shore, the crew realised that in the chaos they had left one man behind. Only later did they find out how the engineer, discovering that he was the last living man on the ship, lowered a life craft and clambered in.

The Ukrainian navy, with help from a reconnaissance drone and the man’s desperate text messages to his family, located and rescued him a day later.

“The situation has transformed over the past two or three weeks,” Dmytro Pletenchuk, a spokesman for the Ukrainian navy, said. Russia had expanded the range of drones used to strike ships and ports along Ukraine’s narrow grain corridor, he said.

The number of such attacks has also dramatically increased. Two days after the attack on the Venturo, ten died, including citizens of Syria and India, during a Russian attack on a Turkish-owned ship, the Golden Leo.

Foreign mariners have also died in

Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian shadow fleet and cargo vessels in the Black and Azov seas. Pletenchuk said that such strikes, which have also increased in step with Ukraine’s mass drone campaign on Russian logistics, were “justified under international law” as many of these boats violated Ukraine’s territorial waters to resupply Russian troops in occupied areas.

Mariners, who are poorly paid and vulnerable to exploitation, are often caught in the crossfire. “It’s a problem that goes beyond war,” said Father Oleksandr Smerechynsky, a chaplain with the Catholic maritime charity Stella Maris, who found accommodation for the Venturo crew.

“The problem is mariners are too often treated not like humans but as tools for a business,” he said.

Gabriel, 46, the third crew member to be injured on the Venturo, had already seen war this year. The last job he did involved calling at Bandar Abbas in southern Iran. “I saw the US bomb Iran, then watched as the Iranians replied,” he said, over a lunch of schnitzel and tomato salad in his hotel. “I felt scared.”

The wars in Ukraine and Iran came close to colliding this week after Kyiv struck an Iranian ship carrying what they said was drone components to Russia across the Black Sea. Iran was said to be planning a ballistic missile attack in response, on one of Ukraine’s port cities, such as Odesa.

Families from across Ukraine still flock to the Otrada beach, a big resort in Odesa, with the sands of Mariupol, Berdyansk and Crimea now out of reach.

It is far from safe. Last month a shard from a Shahed drone, shot down by the Ukrainian air defence over the water, severed the throat of a young holidaymaker on the beach visiting from Kyiv.

Daria Kravchenko, 26, was still wearing sunglasses with a bathing towel wrapped around her head as she bled to death on a sun lounger waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

“It was not a loud sound, just a clap,” said the 40-year-old administrator of a local business who witnessed the event. “Her boyfriend began to shout out, ‘Help, help’. I ran over with a first aid kit. Her boyfriend tried to stop the blood. Then after a few minutes he said, ‘I can’t feel her any more’.

“Many of my colleagues did not come in the next day.”

Another air alarm rings out, but few leave their sun loungers.

Natalia Ruda, a seamstress from Kyiv visiting for some sea air, had taken her son, Mykyta, ten, up the beach to the shelter, but she waited outside. “We are tired of being afraid,” she said.

Liubov Hizhevska, 33, from Vinnytsia, said: “I heard about the woman who died. Of course it’s scary but we’ve already become hardened to it.”

Later that afternoon a pick-up truck pulled up alongside sunbathers further up the beach with an air defence gun mounted at the back. Moments later a Russian drone struck a tanker in the distance. Further out, in waters thick with mines and thousands of miles from his home, Jude Pagunsan’s body drifts in the smouldering wreck of the Venturo, still lying on the sanatorium bed where his crewmates left him.

“He was a good worker and responsible,” said Jacob. “He was a good man. A family man.”

**Names of surviving mariners have been changed at their request to protect them from repercussions from their employers.*

Additional reporting by Viktoria Sybir and Oleksii Morozov

Woman to 'climb 12 Everests' for alpine run

Colette Fountain

She has not always liked running, Sophie Grant admits. "I actually used to hate it. My parents used to write me sick notes to get out of cross country in school."

Now, Grant, 42, is running for her life — or at least her pride — to beat the record for the fastest 2,000km journey across the Via Alpina in the Alps.

The New Zealand native must run for 16 hours to meet her daily target of 63km and 3,650 metres of climbing.

She began her journey in Trieste, Italy, on July 4 and is set to reach Monaco on August 2 in a record-breaking 30 days.

She will have crossed through Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France and Monaco and climbed 109,613 metres, equivalent to climbing Everest more than 12 times.

The current record holder, Jack Catterall, completed the route in 35 days and 21 hours, while the women's record is held by Tessa Caspers at 38 days and 2 hours.

Grant's love of the sport began in her mid-20s with road running. It ramped up a notch in 2013 when her husband, George Woods, got her a place at the Marathon des Sables as a birthday present. It was her first foray into ultra-running, but the 250km, seven-day race pales in comparison to her latest feat, the idea for which came from Woods. Grant said: "I was feeling a little jaded after a difficult few years and I didn't want to go back to the same races."

A typical day starts at 3am with a coffee and porridge with Woods. Grant packs her bag, lubricates her feet, tapes her wrists and heads out into the dark with a headtorch.

Throughout her 16 to 18 hours of daily running, Woods meets her every few hours to restock her bag, give her "real food" such as pasta and send her off with a sandwich. Later, she will take recovery products, shower, eat dinner in bed and sleep. Then "rinse and repeat!".

The scenery has been "unreal", Grant said, and having friends run with her "has definitely been a highlight", but it hasn't always gone to plan. At the start "everything hurt".

"The enormity of the task has felt quite overwhelming ... I cried a bit."

The heat is also a challenge, and the wildfires in France forced her to divert on day 25. Woods found an alternative route, but it added 5km. Despite the unexpected delay, Grant is still on track to finish on day 30.

After, she plans to celebrate with "a lot of sleeping, eating and ice cream".

She hopes to set an example to other women interested in ultra-running.

"The mountains don't care about your gender ... it's really cool to see women out there doing big things and showing other women that it is OK."

After the run Sophie Grant plans to sleep and eat lots of ice cream

ROBY FAZIO/SPLASHNEWS

Thar she blows A lava fountain spews from the Voragine crater on Mount Etna in Sicily, one of the most active volcanoes in Europe, after three weeks of calm

Cheesemakers fight to keep the wolves from their door

Free-grazing goats are key to Storico Ribelle but predators are ever present, writes **James Imam** in Val Gerola

At her lodge overlooking a valley that climbs towards jagged peaks, the cheesemaker Erica Mazzola enacts a ritual perfected over centuries. She heats milk from grazing cows and goats in a copper cauldron before kneading the curd between wooden moulds, then stacks the resulting wheels to mature into Bitto cheese, a local delicacy famed for its grassy, floral flavours as sweet as the surrounding Alpine breeze.

Producing Storico Ribelle, as this variety is known, demands a life of toil and spartan simplicity. Each summer Mazzola and her partner, Manuel Ciocchini, a herder, move into a stone hut lit by solar panels in the Bitto Valley, a popular hiking destination 75 miles northeast of Milan. There, they produce two wheels of cheese a day. Made in small quantities, it ranks among Europe's most expensive cheeses.

Now their traditional lifestyle is under threat. Wolves proliferating in the valley are preying on the goats, forcing them to abandon free grazing. Since the start of this summer, the couple have found the partially eaten remains of three kids and two goats. A further five kids, four goats and two young guard dogs have disappeared.

"We've had to keep them penned in because the area is full of wolves," says Mazzola, 43, nodding towards two surviving kids that once roamed freely. As visiting clients tuck into slices of Bitto and red wine, a guard dog gnaws on the skull of a small ruminant recovered from a hill below. Mazzola suspects it may be one of the missing goats.

Storico Ribelle's small group of producers have spent decades battling the industrialisation of traditional cheesemaking. Confronted with the return of large predators, they are calling on the authorities to help to preserve a way of life they fear could disappear.

"Supporting this cause and being involved in this initiative makes me proud," said Michele Muraro, 61, one of Mazzola's clients. He owns a wine bar near Treviso specialising in regional produce and sells the cheese there.

Produced with unpasteurised goats' and cows' milk exclusively in the summer months, when herders lead livestock to mountain pastures, Bitto has been made in Val Gerola and neighbouring Albaredo per San Marco valley for at least 400 years, according to historical records. Some trace its origins back even further, to Celtic communities that retreated into the Alps as the Romans advanced.

Scattered across the valley, Storico Ribelle's 12 producers mature their wheels at altitudes of 1,800m before transporting them 800m down the valley for further ageing at the Bitto Centre in Gerola Alta, a picturesque village. They produce between 900 and 1,000 wheels per year.

The cheese is marketed in Hong Kong and sold in small quantities in Sydney and London. As demand has grown, the price of young cheese has risen by more than a third to €55 per kilogram in the past five years, while that aged for ten years or older has doubled during the same period.

"We are now one of the three or four most expensive cheeses in Europe," says Carlo Mazzoleni, 35, president of the Storico Ribelle consortium, at the Bitto Centre, where the cellar is stacked with specially ordered cheeses.

Wheels aged for more than ten years — which acquire a pungent, tangy flavour and crumbly texture — sell for €300 per kilogram, at least twice the typical price of a comparable wedge of Parmigiano Reggiano.

Erica Mazzola's goats must be penned in to keep them safe from wolves

The return of natural predators now presents a further challenge. Once common in the western Alps, wolves were gradually extirpated around the turn of the 20th century but are making a return amid stringent protections. They were first sighted in the Orobic Alps, of which Val Gerola is part, in 2017. Local authorities last year identified 20 to 25 in three packs. Mazzoleni estimates 30 goats have been killed since the start of summer's pasture season.

Last year, the European Union downgraded the wolf's conservation status from "strictly protected" to "protected", giving member states greater flexibility in managing populations. Yet producers say little has changed. Killing a wolf is punishable by up to three years in prison. "We have of course reported everything to the police," Mazzola said outside her Alpine hut. "They told us that [goats and wolves] have to live side by side."

Cheesemakers called for intervention via a statement released in July. "These incidents of poaching are jeopardising the production of Storico Ribelle cheeses," they said. "No one wants to risk their own animals to feed bears and wolves."

Mazzoleni said wolf attacks were compounding a growing list of pressures, including droughts, sanitary requirements for industrial dairies and unease about raw-milk cheeses after widely publicised cases of children being admitted to hospital after eating contaminated products. Outlining possible responses to the problem — creation of dedicated ecological areas and fertility control — he said responsibility for a solution rested with policymakers and specialists. "You cannot expect a farmer or someone whose job is selling cheese to find the solution."

Back at the lodge, Mazzola said she was desperate to let her goats roam freely again. "Freedom," she said. "That is a cornerstone of the Storico Ribelle methodology."

ALAMY; QUINTINA VALERO FOR THE TIMES;

Is Madrid's oldest temple doomed?

For locals and tourists alike, the best place to watch the sunset in Madrid is the city's oldest monument, the Egyptian Temple of Debod (David Sharrock writes).

The temple, offering spectacular views of the Royal Palace from a hill in the Parque del Oeste, predates the capital by more than a millennium but only arrived there in 1968 as a goodwill gift from Egypt.

For decades, however, the temple's parlous state has generated debate among conservationists. The sandstone walls have had to be cleaned of graffiti, while a reflective pool that used to surround the temple, keeping the public at a safe distance, was drained and left in disrepair. Now, a campaign by Tito Vivas, an Egyptologist and historian, has drawn widespread attention to the monument's plight.

"More than half a century ago, Egypt gifted Spain the Temple of Debod as a sign of gratitude for its help in rescuing the Nubian monuments. But that gift came with conditions: protect it and cover it. The United States, Italy and the Netherlands complied. Spain did not," Vivas said. "The stone is crumbling, the temple is degrading and we still fail to honour the commitment we signed. And today, we are still letting it die."

His denunciation led a private consortium of Madrid business leaders to launch a privately funded competition seeking proposals to safeguard the beloved monument. The competition's organiser, Madrid Foro Empresarial (MFE), has invited universities and schools of architecture across Europe, the US and Egypt itself to submit proposals by mid-September. Three winning proposals will be handed to Madrid city council for potential development.

The 2,200-year-old structure was given to Spain in gratitude for its assistance during the salvage of the Abu Simbel monuments and is the only one of four Nubian temples donated by Cairo that remains exposed to the weather.

Temples that were given to the US, Italy and Netherlands were reconstructed under protective roofs or inside enclosures. The Madrid temple stands on the site of a former military barracks where Franco's military rebellion against the Spanish Republic 90 years ago failed after soldiers refused to participate in the rising.

Vivas, who is on the judges' panel of the competition, said the temple was being treated as an "urban ornament" used chiefly for *botellones* — parties held by teenagers — and Instagram photos. When The Times visited this week, a solitary guard was on duty at the temple's entrance but the clusters of tourists lining up to use it as a backdrop for their sunset photographs were polite and well-mannered.

The competition's prize money of €15,000 (£12,830) comes from membership fees paid by businesspeople affiliated to the MFE.

The Temple of Debod, a popular spot to watch the sunset over Madrid, used to boast a reflective pool, which was drained as it fell into disrepair

Glitz, glamour and a maths megastar

China

Richard Spencer China Correspondent

Pity a brilliant young Chinese academic called Deng Yu. In a more just universe, Deng, 37, would be on the front page of every newspaper at home and his name echoing round the world. He was this month named winner of a Fields Medal, awarded to groundbreaking mathematicians under the age of 40 every four years, and regarded as the subject's equivalent of a Nobel prize.

As the first Chinese citizen to win the medal in its 90-year history, he would normally have been granted rock star status in a country obsessed both with science and with international prestige.

But he was only joint first. Also on the presentation stage was another Chinese mathematician based abroad, and Wang Hong was an even rarer specimen. She was not only the joint first Chinese, but just the third woman to be given the prize, after Iran's Maryam Mirzakhani in 2014 and Ukraine's Maryna Viazovska in 2022. And while Deng won respectful plaudits, even the dubious honour of a slice of Communist Party censorship, it is Wang, 35, over whom China has gone mad.

She has a compelling life story, involving struggle, determination and, of course, brilliance. She was admitted to Peking University, the nation's most prestigious, at the age of 16 in 2007. A daughter of teachers, she is from Guangxi province in the far south, a rural and in those days poor region, in an education system that favoured the metropole. She was initially turned down from the maths programme, only transferring after a year in the earth science department. From there on, her rise was stellar. She took postgraduate degrees in France, at the elite École Polytechnique and Paris-Sud University, followed by a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Now a full professor at both New York University and France's Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques, she had her breakthrough moment last year when, with a colleague, she posted a full 127-page proof of the so-called three dimensional Kakeya conjecture.

The conjecture is often described as calculating the minimum space needed to rotate a needle in all directions. It is, however, far, far more complicated — too complicated to say for most of Wang's online legions of new fans who decided only to focus on her appearance at the medal ceremony.

This proved another unfair comparison for Deng. Short and visibly nervous, he wore a conventional blue suit, with a light blue shirt and dark blue tie. The two other winners — John Pardon of the United States, and Jacob Tsimerman of Canada — were dressed like university mathematicians: Pardon in a tight-fitting dark suit and black shirt, and Tsimerman in a shimmering silver tuxedo with matching shirt and bow tie.

Next to them stood Wang in a sleek black pantsuit by Alexander McQueen, a white T-shirt, a gold Cartier necklace and Lindberg spectacles. Identified within hours by social media users from Cartier's website, the necklace quickly sold out across the brand's China stores.

CHRISTOPHE PEUS

Wang Hong, 35, has garnered a legion of online supporters since being named a joint winner of a Fields Medal, with the Cartier necklace she wore to the award ceremony selling out across China

Users quickly scrolled back through previous photos, identifying other brands, including Scottish woollen jumpers, and declaring her maths' fashion muse. Among the unlikely pictures that turned up, provided by the École Polytechnique itself, was one of her wearing a historical French army uniform. The École was founded during the French revolution as a military engineering institute, and all students — even those overseas — have to undergo military training and be photographed accordingly. Students in China undergo military training but no one has dug up a picture of Deng in uniform.

Deng has an equally distinguished record, having won a gold medal in the international mathematical olympiad at 16, given a place at Peking University without having to sit the entrance exam, and transferring on to MIT before he even finished his degree.

He is now professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago, and won his Fields Medal for his work in partial differential equations and mathematical physics.

Unlike Wang, who released a brief statement of gratitude for her prize to the Chinese media, he has given interviews about his work to specialist science writers. One question reflects a strain of commentary online — if it was significant that both winners were working abroad. It has been noticed that unlike other winners, neither Deng nor Wang's success has been acknowledged publicly by the politburo.

When interviewed for the social media account of Peking University's mathematics department, Deng said he would recommend all scholars to have "at least one comprehensive overseas experience during their academic career". The paragraph was later removed.

The opposite happened to the glowing profile — without comment from her — of Wang that appeared on the front page of the stodgy local Communist Party newspaper of Guangxi. In what is believed to be a first, the paper sold out quickly. It ordered a new print run when it realised that copies were being "scalped" and sold on as souvenirs for 15 times the 15p cover price.

Business

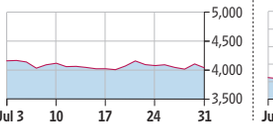
WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,868.05 (-29.22) ▼

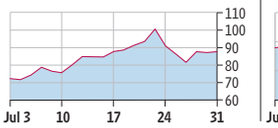
Dow Jones (midday)
52,384.95 (+176.89) ▲

COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,043.41 (-69.26) ▼



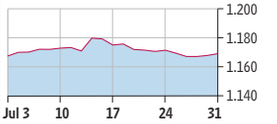
Brent crude (6pm)
$87.77 (+0.60) ▲



CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3464 (+0.0002) ▲

£/€
€1.1678 (+0.0010) ▲



Sainsbury's sells Argos to retail veterans for 'knock-down' £120m

Isabella Fish Retail Editor
Graham Ruddick Deputy Business Editor

J Sainsbury has agreed to sell Argos for £120 million to a venture led by two retail veterans, valuing the former catalogue retailer at less than a tenth of the price it paid a decade ago.

The UK's second-largest supermarket said that it planned to offload the troubled business to a new company called Swift Partners, led by Richard Pennycook, a former chief executive of the Co-op and finance director of Morrisons, and Trevor Strain, who was finance director and chief operating officer at Morrisons.

The deal was backed by the investment firm True Capital, which is led by the executive chairman Matt Truman.

Shares in Sainsbury's rose by 3¾p, or 1 per cent, to 359½p yesterday as investors welcomed its decision to exit the non-food business and focus on its core grocery operations.

The sale represents a discount of just over 90 per cent on what Sainsbury's paid when it acquired Home Retail Group, the owner of Argos, for £1.4 billion in 2016, but the company said the transaction would allow it to complete its "food first" strategy and concentrate capital and management attention on supermarkets.

Pennycook, Strain and Truman are betting that Argos remains an underappreciated retailer with a valuable national store network, fast-fulfilment capability and a brand that continues to resonate with consumers. They believe that the business can perform better with owners whose sole focus is Argos rather than as part of a wider supermarket group.

For Sainsbury's, the disposal represents the latest stage in the plan by Simon Roberts, the chief executive, to simplify the group and prioritise food retailing.

Squeezed by falling discretionary spending and intense competition from online rivals such as Amazon, Argos became a low-margin drag that diverted management focus and capital away from Sainsbury's core grocery strategy.

As part of that strategy, Sainsbury's sold Argos's financial services card portfolio in 2024 for £720 million.

The company also attempted to sell the wider Argos business last year through talks with the Chinese ecommerce group JD.com, but discussions collapsed after the potential buyer sought to revise its terms. The

Continued on page 44

Tax anger as BP exits North Sea

Government under pressure over energy levy

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

BP's new boss has called time on its presence in the UK North Sea after 60 years, piling pressure on the government to address the high tax regime.

The FTSE 100 energy group said yesterday it was launching a sale process for the business, which is the fifth-biggest UK producer and is estimated to be worth £2 billion.

Meg O'Neill, chief executive, said: "As we focus our portfolio and direct capital to our highest-value opportunities, we believe our North Sea business will be better positioned as part of another company."

The announcement triggered renewed criticism of the high tax regime that critics say renders the ageing basin "uninvestable". The North Sea is subject to a 78 per cent effective tax rate thanks to the energy profits levy, which was introduced as a windfall tax by the Conservatives after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has been increased and extended under Labour.

When the levy was first brought in O'Neill — then running Woodside Energy — told The Times it was a "red flag" for investors.

After joining BP in April, she said she still saw "untapped potential" in the UK North Sea but made clear that unlocking this was subject to discussions with government.

Biraj Borkhataria, analyst at RBC Capital Markets, said: "Under the current regime I would imagine the company deemed it uninvestable. Most countries have been incentivising domestic resource development, including Denmark, and the UK is clearly an outlier on this front."

Brian Gilvary, BP's former finance chief who now chairs Ineos Energy, said: "Until the energy profits levy gets resolved and the government of the day embraces its own natural resources, the UK sector of the North Sea remains unattractive, while its Norwegian cousins continue to invest to create value with the same rocks and import their gas into the UK, benefiting the Norwegian tax system."

BP stressed that it was not exiting Britain altogether as it would retain its UK aviation fuel distribution business, retail sites and trading desk alongside its London headquarters.

O'Neill said: "The UK has been our home for more than 100 years and will continue to play an important role in our future."

There has been speculation that O'Neill could consider moving its listing from London to New York.

This year BP held talks with Ithaca Energy about a potential sale of the UK North Sea business, but these ended without agreement.

Analysts suggested that the most likely buyer was Neo Next+, which is already the biggest UK North Sea producer after combining the assets of TotalEnergies and Repsol with those formerly owned by ExxonMobil.

Analysts at Jefferies said BP's announcement "ratchets up the political pressure for UK North Sea fiscal and regulatory clarity for the new UK government leadership".

MICHAEL NAGLE/GETTY IMAGES

Cut above Yael Aflalo, founder of the womenswear brand Reformation, opens the day's business on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday, watched by Hali Borenstein, chief executive. The company raised $210 million at its IPO

FTSE 100's best month since Iran war

Robert Miller

London's leading equity index enjoyed its best monthly performance since the outbreak of the war in the Gulf between America and Iran.

The FTSE 100, which earlier in the session had touched a new intraday record high of 10,989.45, may have slipped at the close by 29.22 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 10,868.05 but in July it rose by 3.5 per cent, its best monthly gain since February and a fourth consecutive month of gains. During the week the index rose by 1.2 per cent.

The strong performance was helped by the fact that the FTSE 100 has few listed technology companies and is dominated by the old-world stocks of miners, financials and defence. Many of the investors putting their money into London shares have sold out of markets exposed to the sell-off in global semiconductor and artificial intelligence-linked companies.

The Kospi index in South Korea, for example, which is dominated by SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics, has been one of the worst hit and certainly the most volatile. It ended yesterday with a daily bounce of 17.9 per cent, the biggest on record, but through July it was down by 22.2 per cent, the worst decline since October 2008.

Tom Stevenson, investment director at Fidelity International, said: "The FTSE 100 is behaving much as we might expect an old economy index to behave," adding that "technology-heavy markets are more dependent on the small group of companies that drove global equities higher during the first half of the year, but which are now facing greater investor scrutiny over the sustainability of the AI boom."

Despite the AI-related sell-off, UBS analysts said: "We remain constructive on the AI growth story, but believe investors should manage concentration risk by broadening their exposure to defensive tech stocks."

On the commodity markets oil was the biggest driver of trading. Brent crude, the global benchmark, rose by 23.6 per cent in July, the first monthly gain since March, and was up 1.2 per cent last night at $90.12 a barrel.

Need to know

1 BP's new boss has called time on the FTSE 100 energy group's presence in the UK North Sea after 60 years, piling pressure on the government to address the high tax regime. Page 43

2 J Sainsbury, the UK's second-largest supermarket, has agreed to sell Argos for £120 million to a venture led by two retail veterans, valuing the former catalogue retailer at less than a tenth of the price it paid a decade ago. Page 43

3 London's leading equity index enjoyed its best month since the outbreak of the war in the Gulf at the end of February. The FTSE 100 touched an intraday record of 10,989.45 before closing 0.3 per cent lower at 10,868.05. In July it gained 3.5 per cent. Page 43

4 NatWest's profits rose by more than a fifth in the first half of the year as banks face the prospect of higher taxes under Andy Burnham, the new Labour prime minister. Page 46

5 As Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise marks 25 years as the boss of Next, it is business as usual for the FTSE 100's longest-serving chief executive, who has lasted 18 years and ten months longer than the average blue-chip boss. He has transformed Next from a FTSE 250 retailer into an £18 billion international powerhouse. Pages 48-49

6 Melrose Industries, the FTSE 100 parent of GKN Aerospace, which supplies parts to Boeing and Airbus, has put a proposed share buyback on hold to cover the potential financial fallout from a chemical leak at a manufacturing plant in California. Page 49

7 The sun is shining in the Square Mile, but Malik Karim is recounting what must have been the darkest day in his career as an investment banker. It was 2002 and he had been sacked by Credit Suisse. "I was very angry," he says at Coq d'Argent, the rooftop French restaurant close to the Bank of England. He went on to set up Fenchurch Advisory, one of the leading boutique, independent investment banks in the City. Lunch with The Times, page 51

"De Beers is now something of an albatross around Anglo's neck

Dominic O'Connell, page 47

For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter thetimes.com/newsletters

Why BP is finally giving

After more than half a century of production, the company says its time there is up, **Emily Gosden** writes

When BP started up its first North Sea oilfield in November 1975, it was so momentous that Queen Elizabeth II travelled to Aberdeen to press the button that let the crude flow. "The Queen said the start of the Forties operations marked a milestone in the development of Britain's energy resources upon which our life as an industrial nation depended," The Times reported.

More than half a century later, BP's announcement that it is looking to sell its North Sea oil and gas business is also being seen as a milestone: one marking the decline of Britain's energy resources, as the company that pioneered drilling in UK waters prepares to quit.

BP's history in the North Sea goes back to 1964 when it was awarded its first drilling licence. The next year it made Britain's first North Sea discovery with the West Sole gas field. BP discovered the giant Forties oil field in 1970 and the inauguration by the Queen marked the first time oil flowed ashore by pipeline from the UK North Sea.

BP went on to discover and bring into production many of the biggest fields in the region. According to Rystad Energy, when North Sea oil and gas production peaked in 1999, at the equivalent of almost 4.4 million barrels of oil per day, BP was the biggest producer, pumping the equivalent of more than 600,000 barrels per day.

Oil and gas fields go into natural decline as their reservoirs are depleted, and recent discoveries have not been big enough to replenish reserves. Rystad forecasts UK North Sea production this year of just over 1 million barrels of oil equivalent per day.

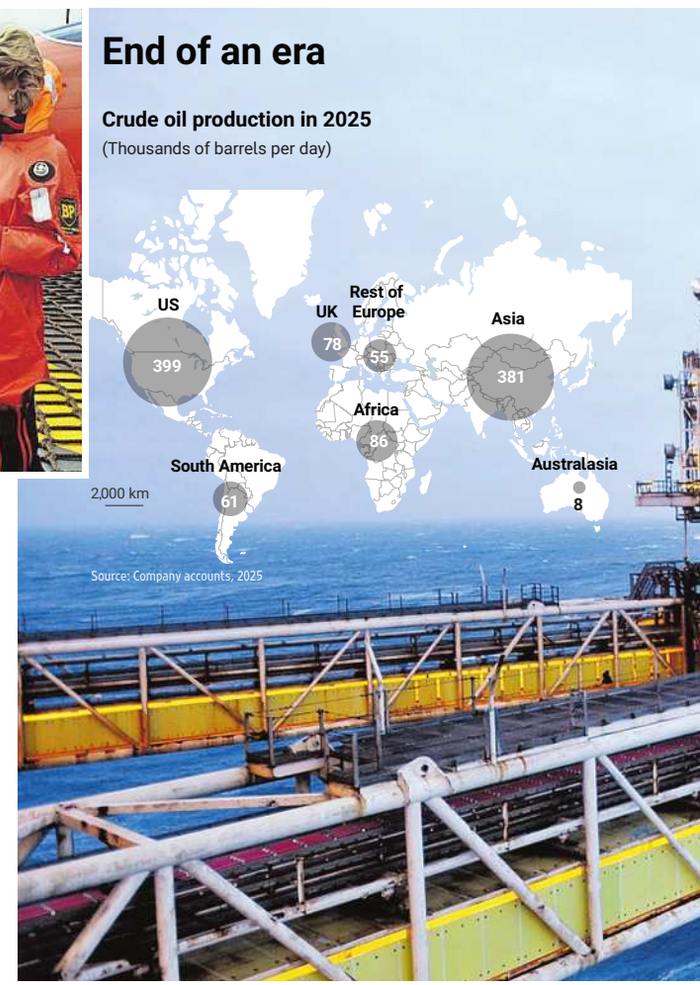
Over the past decade ExxonMobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips have sold most or all of their assets, while Shell sold a big chunk and then combined the rest with those of Norway's Equinor in the Adura joint venture. TotalEnergies of France has combined its assets with Neo Next+, which already brought together Repsol's fields with those formerly owned by ExxonMobil. "BP is the remaining major international oil company yet to consolidate its UK North Sea business in some way," analysts at Jefferies said.

Princess Diana visits the Forties Charlie North Sea oil platform in 1985. BP's operation at Forties was started by Queen Elizabeth II, below, in 1975

BP has slimmed down its North Sea presence over the years, including offloading Forties back in 2003 and its pipeline system in 2017, and most recently offloading its stake in the big Culzean gas field. Rystad estimates BP's production this year will fall to the equivalent of about 86,000 barrels per day as a result. Its biggest assets are the Clair Ridge and Schiehallion fields, though it operates five production hubs across the central North Sea and West of Shetland. "The reason we have not jumped into a joint venture is we believe we have got the best portfolio up there," Gordon Birrell, now head of BP's upstream division, said last year. "However, we are also monitoring any potential changes to the fiscal situation in the North Sea."

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the UK North Sea was subject to a headline tax rate of 40 per cent. As prices soared and the Conservative government scrambled to help energy billpayers, it imposed a windfall tax: the energy profits levy, increasing the tax rate first to 65 per cent and then 75 per cent, while extending it to 2029. Even long after prices receded from wartime highs in 2024, Labour upped the rate to 78 per cent and extended it until 2030.

Warnings of mounting job losses and investment being deterred led to repeated rumours that Labour might end the levy early to replace it with a more benign regime, but no such change has been forthcoming. In a further signal of hostility to the industry, the Labour government also pledged not to issue



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sainsbury's sells Argos

agreement with Swift Partners means Sainsbury's will receive at least £120 million, including upfront and deferred payments and proceeds from the sale of the Argos distribution centre.

The supermarket group expects to receive at least £70 million when the transaction completes, which is expected to be in February, with a further £50 million of deferred consideration over the following three years.

Sainsbury's said the deal was expected to have a neutral effect on underlying operating profit and to deliver a low single-digit increase in underlying earnings per share.

Lower lease liabilities and commercial agreements are expected to offset the loss of Argos's operating contribution. Lease-adjusted net debt is expected to fall by about £250 million.

The transaction will result in a non-cash impairment charge of about £350 million. Sainsbury's will retain responsibility for the Argos pension scheme.

Broker reaction was broadly positive about the deal.

Bet on Argos brand's enduring popularity

Behind the story

What do two veteran retailers see in Argos that others have missed? Sainsbury's is walking away from the former catalogue business it bought for £1.4 billion a decade ago, yet Richard Pennycook and Trevor Strain have decided now is exactly the right moment to buy (Isabella Fish writes).

Their confidence is rooted not in nostalgia, but in the belief that Argos has become an underappreciated retailer with a nationwide store network, fast fulfilment and a brand that still resonates with millions of shoppers.

The duo bring a rare combination of supermarket, retail and investment experience to the deal.

Pennycook is one of British retail's most experienced executives, best known for leading the turnaround of the Co-operative Group as chief executive between 2014 and 2017.

During a career spanning more than three decades, he also held senior roles at businesses including Morrisons, JD Wetherspoon, Laura Ashley and Howdens Joinery.

Strain spent 13 years at Morrisons, rising to become chief financial officer and then chief operating officer during a period when the supermarket was attempting its own turnaround.

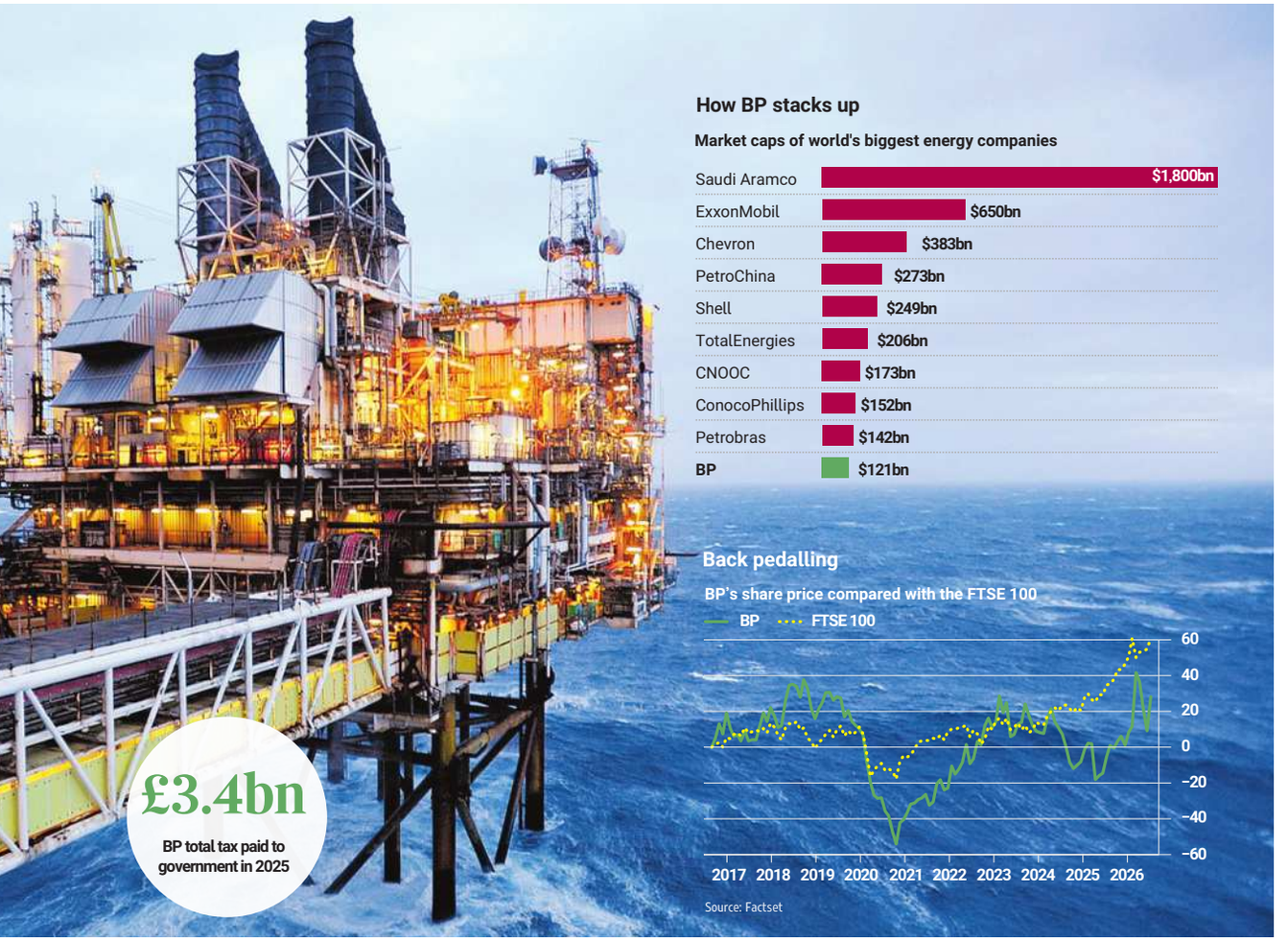
Earlier in his career he held senior finance positions at Tesco, giving him experience of operating at scale in some of Britain's most competitive retail environments.

The pair are joined by Matt Truman, co-founder of True Capital, the investment and innovation firm focused on consumer and retail businesses. True, which Truman founded with Paul Cocker in 2013, invests across venture capital, private equity and public markets, with a portfolio spanning more than 50 companies. Its investments include businesses such as the Cotswold Company, Moonpig, Zwift, Games Workshop, Represent and Cranswick, while its advisory arm works with global retailers on strategy, technology and innovation.

Together, the three investors that make up the new entity Swift Partners believe Argos represents an opportunity to combine experienced retail ownership with the specialist consumer and digital expertise that True Capital has developed.

As Pennycook puts it: "Sainsbury's is a fantastic business but when Simon Roberts and the Sainsbury's team get up in the

up on North Sea oil and gas



any new exploration licences. At the same time, BP has been enjoying a purple patch exploring elsewhere in the world, including its biggest discovery in 25 years at Bumerangue off Brazil last summer, with other options in Namibia, Trinidad and Azerbaijan.

Against that backdrop, the North Sea struggles. "BP has options to invest globally and clearly the UK does not compete," said Biraj Borkhataria, of RBC Capital Markets. BP was carrying out a sweeping portfolio review and pursuing a $20 billion divestment target even before Meg O'Neill took the top job in April with a clear remit to make the company simpler, leaner and more profitable.

The American had already made her feelings on the UK windfall tax abundantly clear when it was first introduced and she was running Woodside, telling The Times it was a "red flag" showing that Britain was "not a particularly conducive place to invest". Jefferies analysts said the sale announcement "clearly shows there are no areas off limits to CEO Meg O'Neill". For the government, they noted, it "ratchets up the political pressure for UK North Sea fiscal and regulatory clarity".

Despite the hostile tax situation, Toby Fulton of Wood Mackenzie thinks BP's portfolio is an attractive opportunity for the right buyer. "The portfolio includes some of the longest-life assets on the shelf," he said. "New UK-focused strategic venture Neo Next+ is a key candidate." Rystad had suggested that Neo Next+, Adura and Ithaca are all contenders, with Ithaca already having held talks with BP over a £2 billion sale.

Whoever ends up buying, it will mark the end of an era for BP.

US energy giants shrug off Iran war disruption

Times Business Reporter

Two of America's biggest oil companies have reported strong second-quarter profits as the war between the US and Iran disrupts global energy markets and keeps crude oil prices high.

However, while Chevron beat the expectations of Wall Street with its highest quarterly profit in at least six years, ExxonMobil missed analysts' estimates despite hitting a four-year profit high.

The price of Brent crude, the global benchmark, was 23 per cent higher during the April-June quarter compared with the previous three months, as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remained limited due to the threat of attacks.

Chevron said that adjusted earnings in the three-month period were $12 billion, with the upstream or production arm contributing earnings of $8.2 billion, up 200 per cent on the same quarter last year.

The second-largest US oil major has less Middle East production than its peers, allowing it to reap the benefits of higher oil prices without the large output disruption that has hit rivals.

ExxonMobil, the largest US oil major by market capitalisation, reported adjusted earnings up by 67 per cent from the first quarter to $14.7 billion, below the consensus analyst estimates, although the quarterly profit was more than double the amount in the same period last year.

Neil Hansen, chief financial officer of Exxon, said that the company's underlying results were strong and attributed the miss to "extreme swings" in commodity prices and margins that were difficult to model.

About 450,000 barrels per day of lost output was related to liquefied natural gas production from Qatar, which suffered attacks on its energy facilities by Iran this year.

morning, the first thing they think about is food and grocery. Whereas for Matt, Trevor and I, the first thing we're going to be thinking about is Argos."

Their bet is that Argos has not lost its relevance, but has simply lacked owners whose entire focus is on helping it to grow.

For Sainsbury's, meanwhile, the deal represents the logical conclusion of Roberts's "food first" strategy. Roberts, who became chief executive of Sainsbury's in 2020 after more than 15 years with the business, has focused on strengthening the supermarket's core grocery proposition and simplifying the group's wider portfolio.

Having already sold Argos's financial services arm and failed in an attempt to offload the retailer to China's JD.com last year, the supermarket group can now devote its attention and capital entirely to food retailing while retaining many of the benefits Argos brings to its stores.

The deal is unusual. Hundreds of Argos branches will continue to trade inside Sainsbury's supermarkets under a long-term concession agreement, while the companies will continue to share the Nectar loyalty scheme.

Sainsbury's gains rental income and footfall, while Argos retains the nationwide store network that underpins its same-day proposition.

The deal also marks a reversal of the strategic bet made by Sainsbury's almost a decade earlier. In 2016, its chief executive at the time, Mike Coupe, argued that buying the Argos parent Home Retail Group for £1.4 billion would transform Sainsbury's into a modern, multi-channel retailer capable of competing with Amazon and changing consumer habits.

A decade later, Pennycook and his partners are effectively betting that the underlying logic of that deal was not wrong, but that Argos may perform better with owners whose sole focus is unlocking its potential. For customers, perhaps the biggest reassurance is that there is no appetite for a radical overhaul.

Pennycook says the existing Argos leadership team will remain in place, while Swift focuses on separating the retailer's technology systems from Sainsbury's, expanding its online marketplace and making better use of customer data through Nectar.

Rather than reinventing Argos, the new owners believe the opportunity lies in improving what is already working. That includes keeping stores, despite the relentless rise of online shopping.

"Amazon is a fearsome competitor and there are others out there as well, but our model is unique," Pennycook says.

"Ninety-five per cent of the population can get their products the same day. And for a lot of people, it doesn't suit to have a package delivered to home.

"Whereas millions of people are in and out of Sainsbury's stores every day and there we are, right on their doorstep."

$400bn sliced off Apple amid AI chip supply woes

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

Apple shares fell more than 9 per cent, wiping more than $400 billion from one of the world's most valuable companies by late afternoon in New York yesterday, after the iPhone maker said that the artificial intelligence boom was draining the supply of microchips.

Tim Cook, Apple's outgoing chief executive, said the company was "seeing some very significant constraints ... with limited flexibility in the supply chain to remedy it".

Big technology firms have been rushing to buy up advanced chip-making capacity and memory chips to power AI data centres, bringing shortages and price increases that are expected to shrink both the personal computer and smartphone markets this year.

Apple had cushioned some of the blow by drawing on stockpiled inventory, but Cook said the buffer was fading and that shortages were keeping it from meeting strong demand for its devices.

Investors were also worried about softer growth in Apple's services business, which includes the App Store and subscriptions like Apple TV+.

"Apple's leverage over the supply chain appears to be in question and it's not clear that AI is serving as any measurable tailwind to products or services, with its future monetisation impact still uncertain," Morgan Stanley analysts said. "In fact, one could argue App Store softness might even be a result of AI re-prioritising customer time."

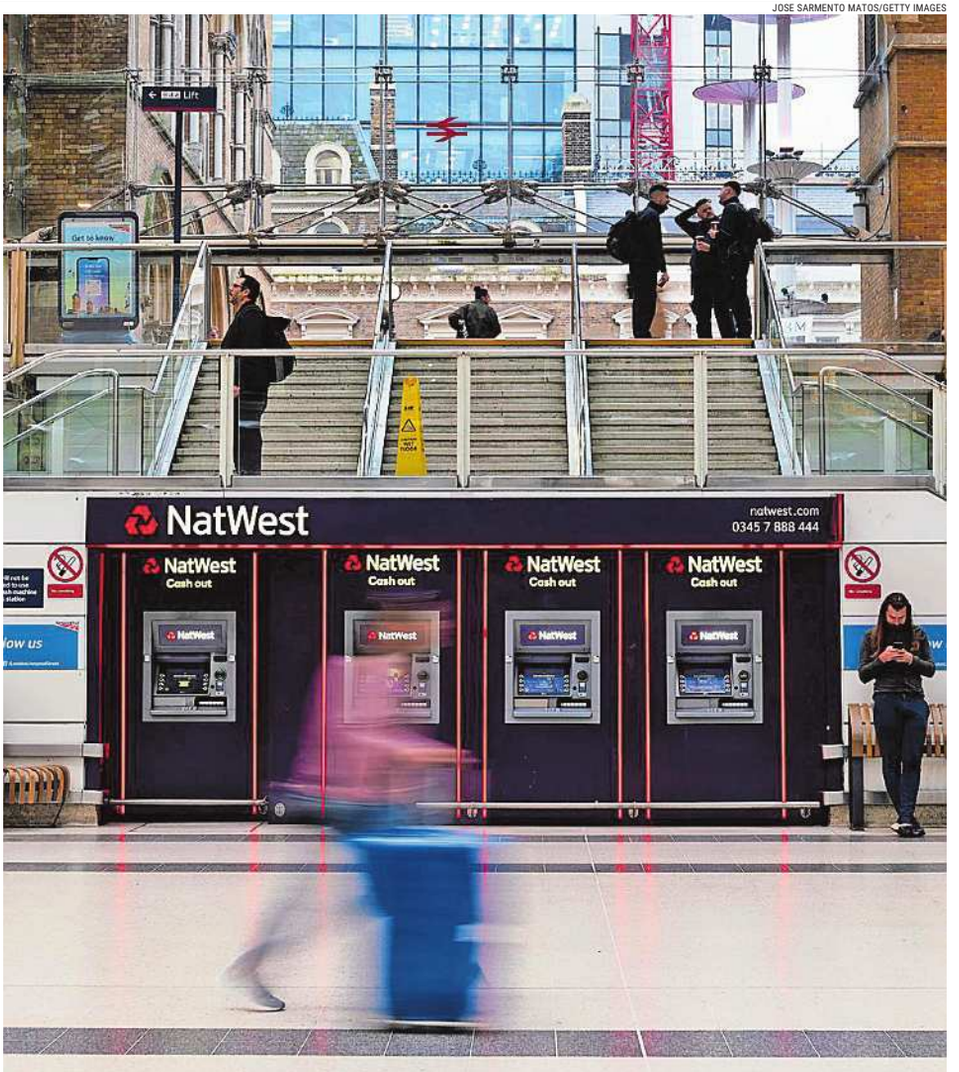
American companies reporting earnings are seeing big swings in share prices as sentiment around AI shifts.

Amazon's shares were up a little over 15 per cent in afternoon trading in New York after the tech giant's strong cloud sales growth reinforced investor confidence in its big AI bets.

Business

NatWest profits surge despite fears of higher tax

JOSE SARMENTO MATOS/GETTY IMAGES



NatWest profits hit £4.3 billion; Paul Thwaite, chief executive, said: "If you want strong economies, you need strong banks"

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

NatWest profits rose by more than a fifth in the first half of the year as banks face the prospect of higher taxes under Andy Burnham, the new prime minister.

The FTSE 100 lender reported net interest income — the difference between what the bank charges borrowers and what they pay savers — was up by 12.6 per cent to £6.9 billion, while profit before tax rose 20.4 per cent to £4.3 billion, beating analysts' forecasts of £4.1 billion.

The group's total income increased by 11 per cent to £8.9 billion and it strengthened its guidance for full-year returns and capital generation.

Unions are pushing for a higher surcharge on bank profits. The Trades Union Congress has pushed for a surcharge of up to 35 per cent, which it said would raise £60 billion from the banks over four years and could be used to lower energy bills for households.

However, CS Venkatakrishnan, the Barclays chief executive, called for recognition of the banking sector's role in driving growth this week.

Paul Thwaite, the chief executive of NatWest, said that while the bank had delivered a strong set of results, this was "on the back of really strong customer activity".

He added: "My strong belief is that if you want strong economies, you need strong banks ... and in that regard, it's really important to have consistency and stability of policies. That's important so businesses can plan, but it's also in respect of the signals which it sends to investors.

"We're the biggest lender to infrastructure, we have the biggest [small business] bank. It's important that we play our part and get growth in every nation and region of the UK."

He said the bank would bring forward the board's assessment of whether to start a share buyback and would pay investors an interim dividend of 12p per share.

The group said it had recognised costs of £28 million tied to its acquisition of Evelyn Partners, the wealth management firm, for £2.2 billion in June. As part of the deal, NatWest also paid off Evelyn Partners' debt of £674 million and the bank settled the management team's loans, worth a total of £11 million.

The Evelyn Partners acquisition was NatWest's biggest deal since 2008 and represented a strategic shift from Thwaite to expand the group's wealth management business, where it was already dominant through Coutts, its private banking arm. The private banking and wealth management division received net inflows of £2 billion over the first half.

"Evelyn brings with it the UK's biggest employee adviser base, longstanding relationships and a digital investment platform, Best Invest," Thwaite said. "Integration has started and we are already seeing good business referrals in both directions, and we have started trialling Best Invest with our customers in retail banking, all in a market with considerable long-term growth potential."

Shares in NatWest Group, which are up 8 per cent so far this year, rose 22p, or 3.2 per cent, to 705¾p yesterday

Gary Greenwood, an equity analyst at Shore Capital, said he was "generally cautious on the sustainability of sector returns" and noted the "potential risk of increased competition and political attention".

NatWest upgraded its targets for return on tangible equity, the banking sector's measure of returns, saying this would exceed 19 per cent, having previously aimed for more than 17 per cent. Greenwood said the upgrade was "broadly in line" with the market's expectations for the FTSE 100 lender.

Thwaite said the bank was developing artificial intelligence tools for customers and that the "real value" of machine learning "comes not from technology but when it builds strong relationships, supports productivity and strengthens trust".

He added: "There's no doubt that AI is reshaping financial services, but success in our sector has long been built on relationships and on trust. Though the pace may be faster and the tools different, these fundamentals remain the same."

BA owner hit by war and fuel costs

Charlotte Bend

The owner of British Airways has said it no longer expects passenger numbers to grow this year after profits were hit by higher fuel costs and weaker demand due to the US-Iran conflict.

International Consolidated Airlines Group (IAG) said in its half-year results yesterday that it now expects capacity to be flat this year compared with 2025. The company had previously said it was aiming for capacity growth of around 3 per cent this year.

IAG reported a 1 per cent rise in revenue to €16.1 billion for the first half of 2026 but said operating profits were down 14 per cent to €1.6 billion.

The company has followed other European airlines in struggling with spiralling fuel costs since the war in the Middle East began at the end of February. Ryanair and easyJet have also warned that the conflict was driving up costs and dampening travel demand.

IAG owns British Airways, Iberia, Vueling, Aer Lingus and the low-cost airline Level. Formed in 2011, IAG is registered in Spain with its headquarters in London and operates across 285 destinations in 93 countries. It employs more than 75,000 people and has a fleet of more than 600 planes.

Luis Gallego, chief executive, said: "With these results IAG has again demonstrated that its excellent fundamentals are supporting continued value creation for our shareholders, despite the impact of the crisis in the Middle East and wider geopolitical events.

"We are well-positioned to deal with these near-term headwinds with a diverse portfolio of world-class brands in large and attractive markets, industry-leading margins, significant free cash flow and a strong balance sheet and attractive shareholder returns."

€1.6bn
First-half operating profit, down 14%
IAG

Shares in IAG fell 6¾p, or 1.5 per cent, to 432p yesterday following the results. They initially fell 5 per cent in early trading but recovered ground.

IAG said its fuel costs for the year would be between €8.3 billion and €8.6 billion, slightly lower than the roughly €9 billion forecast in May. All of IAG's airlines were hit by higher fuel prices from March onwards, as fuel costs and emissions charges climbed nearly 23 per cent in the second quarter to €2.22 billion, the company said.

IAG's airlines are expected to continue suspending most routes in the Middle East, including the Gulf states as well as Israel and Jordan, for the rest of the year.

In Africa, the Middle East and Asia the group reduced capacity by 17.4 per cent in the second quarter.

British Airways saw "very good" unit revenue performance across its North Atlantic schedule, with capacity up slightly in the first half by 0.5 per cent.

ITV's feel-good World Cup followed by ad hangover

Emma Powell Media and Telecoms Editor

An influx of advertising and sponsorship spending around the World Cup boosted ITV's performance but the company has warned of a slide in such revenue later this year.

Britain's largest free-to-air broadcaster reported an 8 per cent rise in total advertising spending during the second quarter and 3 per cent over the first half of the year, as about 200 brands sought to capitalise on the millions tuning in to watch the football tournament.

However, advertising revenue was set to decline by 5 per cent during the third quarter, attributed to "macroeconomic headwinds".

City analysts had forecast a 3.6 per cent rise in total advertising revenue for the September quarter.

Dame Carolyn McCall, ITV chief executive, said that "some people will have definitely moved money into June and July" but added that the "stop-start" war in Iran and the change in prime minister had added to uncertainty for advertisers.

ITV's total advertising performance for the first nine months of the year was now expected to be flat, which the company said was ahead of the broader advertising market.

This month the FTSE 250 group announced it had agreed a £1.6 billion deal to sell its under-pressure television business to Sky, eight months after the talks first leaked in November.

The combination of Britain's two largest commercial broadcasters, which would give Sky control of a business that reaches more than 20 million households and create a broadcaster accounting for about 20 per cent of all in-home viewing in the UK, is expected to prompt Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, to issue a public interest intervention notice, ITV said.

Dominic O'Connell

Diamonds were once forever for De Beers. Not any more

Cecil Rhodes found a chaotic scene when he arrived at Colesberg Kopje in 1871. It was a ramshackle mining site in southern Africa where prodigious quantities of diamonds had been discovered. He wrote to his mother in Bishop's Stortford, describing the mine as "a number of small holes ... it is like a billiard board with the pockets cut out and the balls moving about ... they take the soil out of these holes and cart it to their tents, where it is sorted ... the dust is sometimes blinding."

Rhodes was an entrepreneur and monopolist par excellence, and with the backing of Rothschild bank turned that cottage industry into De Beers, the world's biggest diamond producer. It is difficult to exaggerate how valuable the De Beers operation has been since Rhodes set it up. By the 1890s it was making profits of £2 million a year, a colossal sum for the time; for reference, William Waldorf Astor paid $1.25 million (about £250,000 at the time) for Cliveden House in 1893.

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer's mining company Anglo American took control in 1927, with the assistance of JP Morgan, and strengthened De Beers' hold on the trade. It dug up and marketed nearly all of the world's diamonds until the 1990s, when the combination of big deposits being discovered outside South Africa and the threat of cartel lawsuits saw it relinquish its total grip.

That supreme wealth, founded on the rock-steady pillars of scarcity and controlled supply, is now at an end. Anglo American is in talks to sell its 85 per cent stake in De Beers for a reported $1 billion. Fifteen years ago, when Anglo bought out the Oppenheimers' remaining minority stake, the deal valued De Beers at just under $13 billion.

That is an astonishing collapse in value. What Anglo — and, unless they were extremely canny, the Oppenheimers — did not foresee was a collapse in diamond prices. Benchmark prices are difficult to measure, as diamonds come in different sizes and grades. The industry analyst Paul Zimnisky, however, compiles an index of rough (uncut) diamond prices, which shows they have fallen by about 45 per cent in the past five years.

The biggest factor in the price fall has been the flood of manufactured diamonds onto the market. The technology to make them has existed since the 1950s, but large-scale production did not start until the turn of the century. A big turning point came in 2018, when a row over how the rival types of diamonds could be marketed — "synthetic" versus "natural" — went to the US Federal Trade Commission. It ruled that the two products were identical, which stripped the miners of their last fig leaf of marketing protection.

Mined diamonds are holding their own in the gemstone market, but they have been swamped in industrial applications, such as drill tips, saws and grinders. China has raced ahead; Henan Huanghe Whirlwind, just one of the big players, produces about 2 billion carats of diamonds a year. De Beers' annual production runs at about 21 million carats.

The end result is that De Beers is now something of an albatross around Anglo's neck. Its interim results this week showed the diamond operations lost $100 million on turnover of $1.6 billion, a slight improvement on the $200 million loss at the same point last year.

Anglo has been trying to sell De Beers for two years, first putting it on the market after fighting off a takeover approach from BHP and coming under pressure to shake up its operations. The likely buyer is Global Diamond Consortium, a group of international investors, including some Qatari funds, fronted by De Beers' former boss Gareth Penny. The wild card in the negotiations is the government of Botswana, which owns a 15 per cent stake and has pre-emptive rights to match any offer made to Anglo.

Whoever the new owner is, De Beers will have to reshape itself drastically if it is to return to profit. The answer may be a sweeping curtailment of production, something Anglo has already started by pausing production at the giant Venetia mine in South Africa for two years and a concentration on larger stones for jewellery. It is hardly a sure bet and if Penny and his new investors cannot pull it off, they will join the long list of industries and companies whose finances have been wrecked by new technology. Ice-harvesting, whale-oil lamps and the video rental shop have all been consigned to the dustbin of history and many others pushed to the margins. Rhodes would have been astonished to think something similar could happen to his creation.

PS

Listeners to The Business, The Times's business podcast, love anything to do with energy. When we touch on it, audience numbers jump. So this week we start a summer mini-series devoted to it. In this week's episode we examine the frailty of the electricity grid and in a couple of weeks' time there is a civilised punch-up between Juliet Samuel, the Times columnist, and Tara Singh, head of RenewableUK, over the future of net zero.

In between comes an examination of the future of the North Sea, a subject given extra zip by BP's decision to sell its remaining assets there. We speak to Amjad Bseisu, chief executive of Enquest, a company built in the North Sea but now looking elsewhere for its future. He speaks for most oil and gas company executives when he points out the illogicality of opposing domestic production while importing oil and gas. A guarantee, Bseisu says, of higher carbon emissions, lost tax revenue and lost jobs.

There are some interesting politics at play too. Donald Trump says Andy Burnham is about to reopen the North Sea, but that would require a repudiation of the Labour manifesto. More likely is a heavily spun version of the status quo, with Burnham approving Rosebank and Jackdaw, two fields currently in regulatory limbo, and not much more.

Burnham is also keen on devolution and the Scottish government has yet to publish its final energy strategy. If it came out in favour of more drilling — which would be a big change from the current presumption against — might it give Burnham sufficient cover to do more?

Dominic O'Connell is business presenter for Times Radio

Universal plunges over streaming worries

Robert Miller

Investors in Universal Music Group headed for the exit after the world's largest music company reported slower growth in subscription revenue, raising concerns about its streaming.

The music label, home to artists including Taylor Swift and BTS, has been a beneficiary of the shift to paid streaming. Its premium valuation rests on its ability to convert that position into steady subscription growth through price increases, subscriber additions and market-share gains, making the quarterly slowdown particularly unsettling for investors.

Subscription revenue growth slowed to 6.7 per cent in the second quarter from 7.9 per cent in the previous three months. The sell-off comes two months after UMG rejected a $64 billion takeover approach from Bill Ackman's Pershing Square, saying the unsolicited proposal undervalued the company.

Top sellers in the three-month period included Noah Kahan, BTS, Olivia Rodrigo, Drake and Olivia Dean.

The Amsterdam-listed shares closed down 25.4 per cent, the biggest one-day drop, wiping about €8.8 billion from UMG's market value to €26.5 billion.

Citigroup said in a note that UMG's quarterly revenue exceeded the broker's expectations, but adjusted core earnings were below its estimate.

The softer core profit reflected recorded-music revenue and repertoire mix, higher central costs and a small merchandising loss, Deutsche Bank said, although it added that improving market-share momentum late in the quarter could support trends.

JPMorgan analysts also said subscription trends could improve in the second half of the year, as UMG's market-share momentum strengthens and release slate improves.

Shares in Vivendi, one of UMG's largest investors, fell 19.5 per cent, their largest one-day drop since 2002.

Sir Lucian Grainge, chief executive of Universal Music, said: "We're delivering on our strategic plan and working to further sharpen our execution, while capitalising on the opportunities presented by new technologies and the ever-evolving music ecosystem.

"Our combination of global reach, local expertise, artist development, vast audio and visual IP and entrepreneurial culture positions UMG to deliver long-term growth, sustained value creation, and creative and commercial success for our artists and songwriters."

Get some wit for your walls

Find your own signed and framed print of our cartoonists' finest work, featuring Peter Brookes, Morten Morland, Peter Schrank and more.

Prices start at £58. Order from timescartoons.com

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Business

Lord Wolfson marks 25 years of success at Next

The peer turned an officewear chain into an £18bn retail giant, **Richard Fletcher** and **Isabella Fish** write

There will be no champagne, no grand speeches and no long, reflective profile interviews in the Sunday papers.

Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise marks 25 years as chief executive of Next today. But it is business as usual for the FTSE 100's longest-serving chief executive, who has lasted 18 years and 10 months longer than the average blue-chip boss.

Wolfson has quietly transformed Next from a FTSE 250 high street retailer, then best known for selling skirts and suits for the office, into an international powerhouse worth more than £18 billion. Next not only sells its own clothes, homeware and beauty lines in more than 80 countries, but helps other retailers and brands too. It has offered access to Next's warehousing, technology, marketing and back-end systems since 2020.

Wolfson is a member of the retail dynasty that founded Great Universal Stores. His father, Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, was a former chairman of Next . However, the then plain Simon Wolfson had a long apprenticeship before landing the top job at Next.

After graduating with a law degree from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1990, Wolfson joined the retailer as a sales assistant at the High Street Kensington store in west London.

In 1991 he was made an assistant to Sir David Jones, the former chief executive, before a stint as retail sales director and then sales and marketing director. He joined the Next board in 1997 and was promoted to managing director for the Next brand. He became chief executive on August 1, 2001 at the age of 33.

Jones had identified Wolfson as his successor as early as 1994. Jones died in 2019 but in his autobiography, *Next to Me*, he wrote of Wolfson: "Simon was a rather shy, intense young man with his father's agile mind, and a list of scholastic successes that included a law degree from Cambridge. He had that rare talent, just like his father, of being able to analyse a problem and find a solution very quickly. The first solution might not be the final answer, but he would go on worrying about the problem until he had an answer that worked."

A few months after Wolfson's appointment, The Times wrote a profile of the new Next boss. "Dislikes: Talking about himself," the profile said. That hasn't changed. In 25 years, Wolfson — who is arguably the most successful retailer of his generation — has never done a traditional profile interview. His early morning routine, favourite book or film and mentor remain a mystery.

He is happy to leave the business to do the talking and has used his annual review to set out his strategy. In his 2024 letter Wolfson explained how writing the annual letter to shareholders helped clarify his own thoughts.

"As is so often the case, the requirement to explain ourselves has been instructive. It has prompted us to step back from the myriad of day-to-day initiatives with which we busy ourselves and reflect on where we are," he said.

The Next boss has also claimed that it benefits employees too: if enough of the retailers' tens of thousands of staff understand the logic behind its numbers, margins and decisions, they are better equipped to make the right calls.

Jonathan Dawson, a former Lazard banker who sat on the Next board between 2004 and 2015, says that the quality of the annual reviews reflects the fact that Wolfson is "one of the most thoughtful chief executives he has ever worked with".

He added: "We spent a lot of time in board meetings talking about economic trends and the implications for consumers ... Shareholder value is at the centre of his strategic thinking."

Over the years the letters have become a lot longer and more personal. In 2019 Wolfson quipped: "No one knows what the high street will look like in ten years, but one thing is certain: the people walking down it will be wearing clothes. And hundreds of thousands of people will be employed in the design, manufacture, distribution, marketing and fulfilment of that product."

In 2020, when traditional retailers were hesitant to list rival, third-party brands on their websites out of fear that it would cannibalise sales of their own products, Wolfson argued that attempting to hide competitors from online shoppers was a losing battle. "There is nowhere to hide on the internet: one way or another our customers will find the brands they want," he wrote. "If they can find what they want on our website, they are more likely to come back to us."

Wolfson and his letters have a reputation for conservative guidance. In March 2024 he briefly broke character by admitting he had actually felt

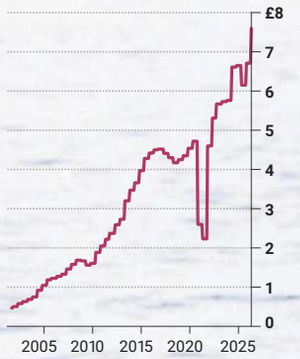
Wolfson became chief executive of Next at 33

Peerless rise

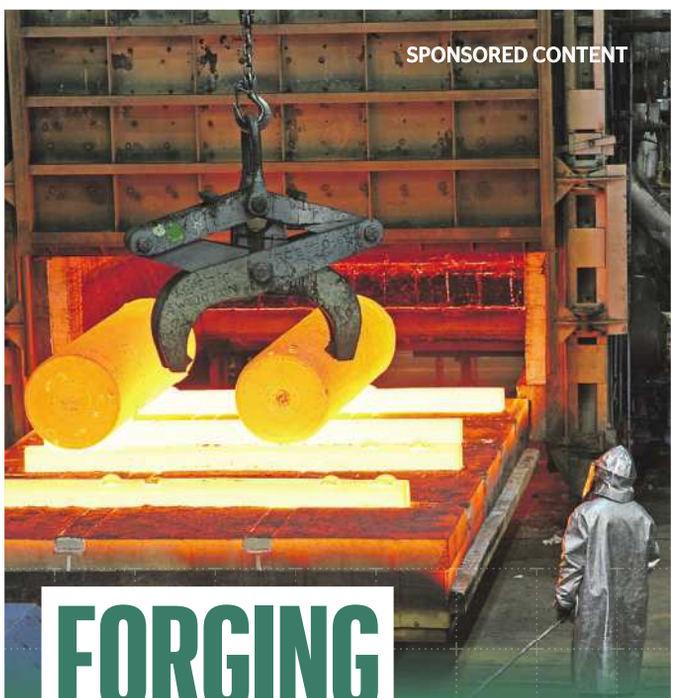
Wolfson's "glorious years"

	Sales	Pre-tax profits
2002	£1.87bn	£265.8m
2016	£4.15bn	£821m

Earnings per share



SPONSORED CONTENT



FORGING AHEAD

Britain's regional businesses are tapping into local strengths to help them scale up and compete. Discover how Lloyds is supporting their journey

In Monday's edition of The Times

LLOYDS

Betfred hits out over tax rises as 132 shops close

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Betfred has blamed higher payroll and gambling taxes for leaving the bookmaker with "no choice" but to close 132 high street branches, putting more than 600 jobs at risk.

Jo Whittaker, chief executive of the Warrington-based bookmaker, which is owned by the billionaire brothers Fred and Peter Done, blamed the "current fiscal and regulatory environment" for having made it "impossible" to keep all of its shop trading.

She said: "We have tried hard to protect all our sites and the colleagues who work in them, but the combined impact of higher employer national insurance contributions, wage inflation, increases in gambling taxes and wider economic uncertainty has left us with no choice. These are well-run shops, staffed by dedicated colleagues, and it is incredibly hard to see any of them close, but the current fiscal and regulatory environment has made it impossible to keep trading all our shops."

A Treasury spokesperson said: "It is wrong to suggest it is the fault of government for these closures. Gambling duty rates for high street shops have not changed."

The closures, which were first reported by Sky News, equate to about 10 per cent of Betfred's portfolio. A consultation process involving more than 600 employees has begun.

Like many in the sector, Betfred has been grappling with the aftermath of Rachel Reeves's decision to increase online gambling taxes.

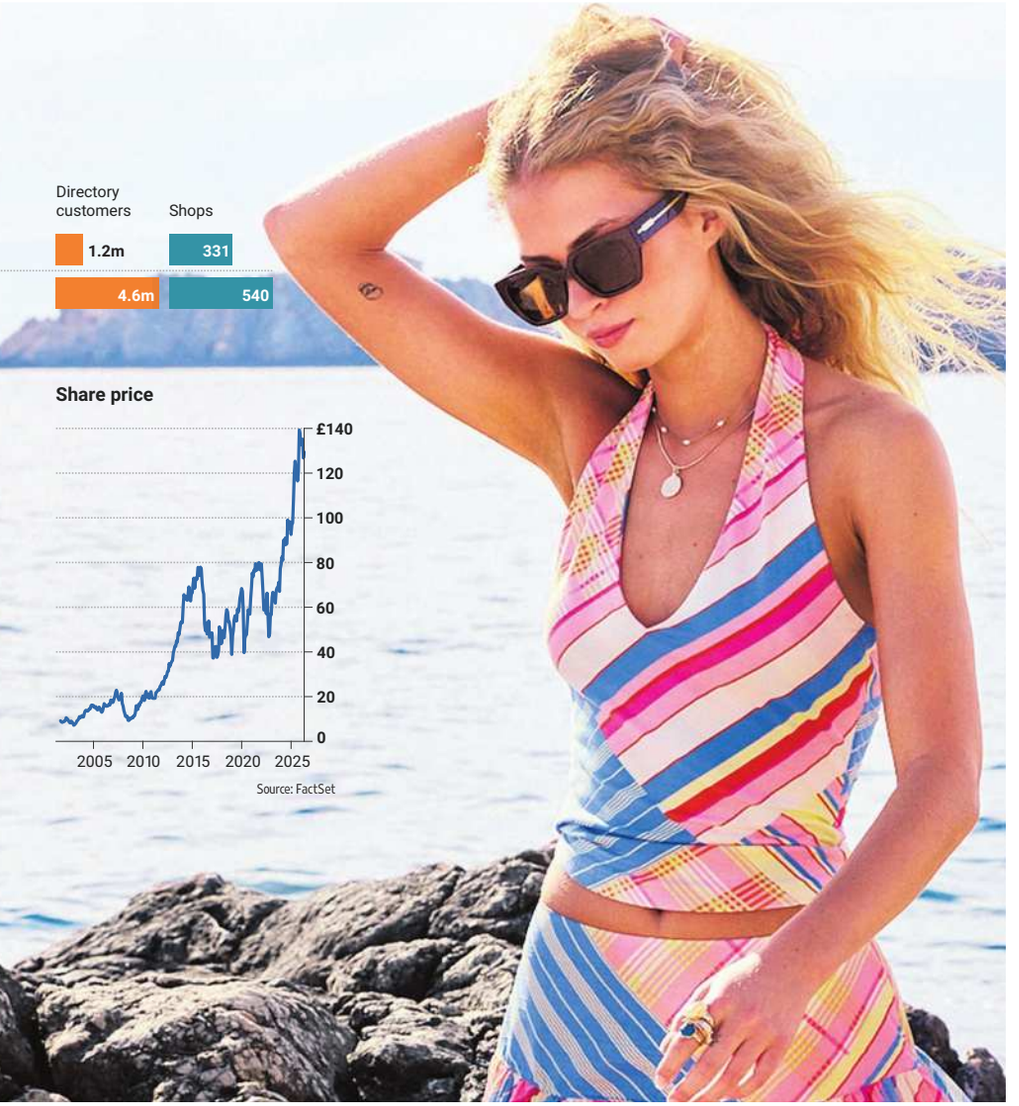
Companies warned that the move would lead to job losses and drive consumers to bet on the black market. On July 16, Entain, the owner of Ladbrokes, confirmed plans to cut 500 jobs, 2 per cent of its total workforce. Paddy Power and William Hill have also shut dozens of outlets over the past year.

Measures announced in last year's autumn budget included an increase in remote gaming duty from 21 per cent to 40 per cent. There will also be a new online sports betting duty of 25 per cent, which will cover all sports except UK horse racing, from April 2027. The levies are expected to raise an extra £1.1 billion annually for the Treasury by 2029-30.

Fred Done, 83, opened his own site in Salford in 1967 with his brother Peter, 79, after winning £200 from an 8/1 bet on England's World Cup win the previous year. They have grown Betfred into one of Britain's biggest gambling companies.

At its peak in 2017 it operated as many as 1,680 high-street betting shops. After the latest closures its estate will comprise almost 1,100.

The Done family is Britain's biggest taxpayer, contributing £400.1 million to the exchequer, according to The Sunday Times Tax List 2026.



positive. "It has been a long time since we started a year in a more positive frame of mind, " he wrote.

However, he immediately tempered it in typical Wolfson style. Later that day he told journalists that he "wouldn't want to come across as ebullient or full of wild optimism," pointing to geopolitical risks and sticky cost pressures.

The letters have become a must-read — not just for Next shareholders but for anyone interested in business and the UK economy. They also chart the rise of Next as Wolfson transformed it.

Wolfson wrote his first missive in January 2002. It largely followed the format of his predecessor Jones and ran to just four pages. Today the annual review regularly has more than 50.

There were some clues about the future direction with the addition of detailed information on the number and size of Next stores and a table setting out the increase in the number of pages in the Next Directory, its catalogue, as Next began broadening its range.

Over the next 14 years pre-tax profit tripled from £265.8 million in 2002 to £821 million in 2016. Sales rose more than 120 per cent, from £1.87 billion to £4.15 billion. Directory sales, which quickly moved online, rose from £362 million in 2002 to £1.6 billion in 2016 as active customers increased from 1.2 million to 4.6 million. The retail business was also growing rapidly: in 2002 Next had 1.9 million sq ft of retail space across 331 shops; by 2016 it was 7.6 million sq ft across 540 shops.

In 2024 Wolfson described this period as the "glorious years". However, in 2017 the business stalled and Next warned its shareholders to brace themselves for lower profits.

Wolfson's review of the business at the end of the year began on a sobering note: "[This] was the most challenging year we have faced for twenty-five years. A difficult clothing market coincided with self-inflicted product ranging errors and omissions."

He added: "At the same time, the business has had to manage the costs, systems requirements and opportunities of an accelerating structural shift in spending from retail stores to online."

In the long run, the shift online was an opportunity to leverage its distribution, marketing and credit infrastructure in the UK and the brand overseas, Wolfson stressed, but in the short term it was a substantial hit to profitability.

Over the next 40 pages he set out the challenges facing the retailer. "Every pound of full price sales lost in retail cost us 60p whilst every pound gained online delivered only 19p of profit," Wolfson explained. "This margin erosion is partly a result of the shift in sales from retail to online.

"Retail carries large fixed costs (such as rent, rates and energy) which in the short term are unable to contract with reducing sales. On the other hand, the online business has significant variable costs which increase with sales (delivery, warehouse picking, returns processing, call centre activity etc)."

By 2020 the business was back on track — with sales and profits rising — but between the end of the financial year and the publication of the full-year results was the outbreak of Covid-19.

His 2020 annual letter was dominated by the pandemic as Wolfson set out a stress test that modelled three scenarios: a 10, 20 and 25 per cent drop in annual sales.

The Times commented at the time: "Lord Wolfson is wasted on shops. Not for the first time, the Next boss is ahead of most companies, not to mention government departments. He's produced a Covid-19 'stress test' for the business."

In the event Next weathered the storm and within two years was once again delivering record profits. The expansion of Next's platform and overseas business and the development of new brands and licences continued apace. Online international sales have turned into a major growth engine.

Initially a services-only model, the Total Platform evolved into an acquisition strategy, with Next taking stakes, and in some cases control of, distressed or underperforming brands such as Reiss, Gap and Victoria's Secret.

Over the last 25 years, earnings per share, Wolfson's favoured measure of shareholder return, has risen more than 1,550 per cent. A strategic share buyback programme has helped drive earnings higher.

In 2013 Wolfson used his annual letter to set out his "six rules" for share buybacks. One financial commentator dubbed the rules "Share Buybacks for Dummies", before arguing that they should be required boardroom reading.

One of Wolfson's six rules was to only use the cash the business does not need to buy back shares.

Shares in Next have risen more than 1,500 per cent since Wolfson's appointment as chief executive. Not that the FTSE 100's longest-standing chief executive is resting on his laurels. In his latest letter he began on a positive note: "Last year was exceptional. Sales were up 10.8 per cent, profit up 14.5 per cent, and earnings per share 17 per cent."

But he quickly added: "A good year in a retail business is gratifying, but also daunting. Ultimately, we are measured against our own performance last year; the better the year, the tougher the 'competition'".

Pathway to the top

1990 Wolfson joins Next as sales assistant at the High Street Kensington store in west London
1997 He is appointed to Next's board of directors
2001 Becomes one of the youngest FTSE 100 CEOs in history by taking the top job at Next
2008 Next acquires its first third-party fashion brand, the young fashion label Lipsy
2010 Wolfson appointed a Conservative life peer, becoming Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise
2014 Next surpasses its rival Marks & Spencer's profit for the first time
2016 Wolfson makes a bold strategic gamble by aggressively expanding Label, selling third-party rival clothing brands directly on Next's website
2018 Next rebrands its famous Next Directory paper catalogue to simply "online"
2020 Next launches Total Platform, its third-party platform
2026 Wolfson marks 25 years as chief executive of Next

Melrose buyback on hold after leak

Simon Freeman

Melrose Industries has put a proposed share buyback on hold to cover the potential financial fallout from a chemical leak at a manufacturing plant in California.

The FTSE 100 parent of GKN Aerospace, which supplies parts to Boeing and Airbus, is pausing the £175 million programme as it awaits clarity on the full impact of the dramatic incident.

Some 50,000 residents were evacuated from surrounding homes and businesses after the leak at the acrylics plant in Garden Grove, 35 miles south of Los Angeles, in May. A tank holding thousands of gallons of flammable, volatile liquid had begun to overheat, raising fears of a possible explosion.

Gavin Newsom, the California governor, declared a state of emergency in Orange county. It was four days before the evacuation order was fully lifted and the scene declared safe for return.

The incident delivered a £16 million blow to Melrose's first-half revenue and it has paid out £13 million to cover the initial emergency response.

A leak at the acrylics plant in Garden Grove led to a state of emergency

It expects to incur additional costs of between £25 million and £30 million in the second half as it faces a series of lawsuits, including federal class actions, alongside compensation claims from displaced residents. The company said: "These cases are complex and at this point the outcomes are uncertain. The group is also assessing a potential compensation programme to reimburse local residents and businesses. Our associated insurance position is under review."

About half the workforce has now returned to the plant, which makes transparent screens used in fighter-jet cockpits and cabin windows. It will operate at 50 per cent of normal capacity until full production can resume.

The drama overshadowed a strong first-half performance for Melrose, with double-digit revenue growth to £1.9 billion, driven by demand across civil aerospace and defence. Operating profit increased 16 per cent to nearly £350 million, but statutory profit was down sharply to £89 million.

The Birmingham-based company has maintained its underlying full-year guidance despite the setback. Shares of Melrose, which peaked above 675p in February, lost 4.4 per cent yesterday session to close down 21p at 454¼p.

Hilton Foods to sell off Dutch vegetarian arm

Jessica Newman

Hilton Food Group has struck a deal to sell its loss-making vegan and vegetarian business as part of a plan to focus on its meat and fresh food.

The FTSE 250 food packaging group said that it has agreed to offload Dalco, its Dutch-based vegan and vegetarian business, for £5.4 million to LiveKindly Production, another Dutch plant-based food processing company.

Hilton became a 50 per cent shareholder in Dalco in 2019 and two years later acquired the rest of the business as part of an attempt to diversify.

The sale comes after Hilton revealed plans to refocus on its core meat operations and deliver "improvement plans" for its underperforming businesses, including Seachill, its UK seafood unit; Foppen, its smoked salmon business; and Dalco, all of which the company said "have limited synergy with the group's core capabilities". Hilton has been struggling with falling volume at Seachill, as well as dealing with regulatory issues at its Foppen unit in Greece.

Dalco made an adjusted operating loss of about £2 million in the first half this year, which is expected to be reported as a loss from discontinued operations in Hilton's interim results in September.

Darren Shirley, an analyst at Shore Capital, said that while the deal is "modest in scale", the proposed disposal is sensible and fully aligns with management's strategic plans.

Analysts at Panmure Liberum said removing Dalco from its portfolio should reinforce the case "for the stability and repeatability of Hilton Foods' core cashflows", where client wins in new regions, such as Walmart in Canada, as well as its expansion into fresh-prepared foods, should keep driving profit growth.

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Jennie Daly, chief executive, said Taylor Wimpey had a "solid first-half performance"

Taylor Wimpey cuts shareholder returns

Tom Howard Property Correspondent

Taylor Wimpey has almost halved the amount of money it returns to shareholders each year amid a "prolonged market downturn" that it fears will persist for a while longer yet.

The housebuilder, one of the biggest in Britain, said it had made the "prudent" decision in an effort to "preserve balance sheet strength" after seeing a 20 per cent drop in its profits in the first half of the year.

Previously Taylor Wimpey paid out 7.5 per cent of its net assets each year through dividends and share buybacks, but it has cut this to 4 per cent. Reflecting the new distribution policy, the company has declared an interim dividend, to be paid on November 13, of 1.2p per share, compared with the half-year dividend of 4.67p per share it announced last summer.

It will also buy back £42 million of shares over the next five months.

"The housing market downturn has proved more prolonged than anticipated, with affordability pressures continuing to affect demand and profitability expectations remaining lower than when the current distribution level was set," Taylor Wimpey said.

"More recently, uncertainty arising from events in the Middle East has added to an already challenging backdrop. Taken together, these factors have led the board to conclude that a lower level of annual distribution is appropriate for the current environment."

The move suggested that the slowdown in new housebuilding in recent months is unlikely to end soon. "If we thought that there was an easy fix, that this was a moment in time that would pass quickly, then we'd have maintained our distribution policy," Jennie Daly, Taylor Wimpey's chief executive, said.

The downturn in the housing market has been more prolonged than expected, the company said as it presented its first-half results

The combination of the bleak outlook and lower dividend payouts sent Taylor Wimpey shares down 5p, or 6.1 per cent, to 78p yesterday. Before the US invaded Iran, they were trading above 116p.

Taylor Wimpey was formed by the merger of Taylor Woodrow and George Wimpey in 2007 and is now the third-largest developer in Britain. It is one of the major builders that ministers are relying on if the government is to get anywhere close to its pledge of building 1.5 million homes before 2030.

After a decent start to the year, the housing market has gone into reverse since the war in Iran, which drove up mortgage rates and knocked already fragile consumer confidence.

More recently, estate agents and other developers have said that a combination of the World Cup, the prolonged heatwave and the arrival of a new prime minister have further slowed the market over the past couple of months.

Between January and June, Taylor Wimpey built 4,986 homes, 274 fewer than in the same period last year and the rate of weekly sales at each of its sites was down 5 per cent year-on-year. As a consequence, it now expects to build about 10,700 homes this year, 200 or so fewer than it had been targeting.

Its profit margins are also under pressure, with Daly, 56, particularly critical of the extra tax and regulatory costs developers have been hit with in recent years.

In the first half, the company turned a pre-tax profit of £116.8 million, compared with a loss of £92.1 million in the opening six months of 2025, when Taylor Wimpey took a hit of more than £200 million from cladding costs. Excluding "exceptional items", profits slipped by a fifth from £148.1 million to £118.6 million.

Daly called it a "solid first-half performance in a challenging market".

We're The Business

From start ups to tech titans, market movers to City CEOs, our weekly podcast dissects the biggest stories in business with the entrepreneurs living through them.

SPONSORED BY pwc

Find The Business wherever you get your podcasts

THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

Rightmove stung by new homes retreat

Tom Howard

Developers building fewer new homes in response to the challenging market backdrop means Rightmove's revenue growth this year will not be as impressive as previously hoped.

Britain's dominant property search website had told shareholders that its revenues would rise by between 8 per cent and 10 per cent in 2026, but it has now trimmed that to between 6 and 8 per cent.

Rightmove blamed that on the fact that "new homes growth remains subdued" and estimated there were 6 per cent fewer new-build developments than a year ago. Weak demand, higher costs and lower house prices were creating viability challenges for builders.

That was reflected in Rightmove's numbers. The group saw a 4 per cent decline in the number of developers signed up to promote their new homes on the site.

Despite revenues likely to come up a little short of previous expectations this year, Rightmove said "cost discipline" meant its annual operating profit would still rise by between 3 per cent and 5 per cent, in line with its earlier guidance.

That, coupled with the announcement of a new £330 million share buyback programme, helped the shares to rise 7¾p, or 1.7 per cent, to 464½p yesterday.

The FTSE 250 company says new-homes growth remains subdued

"There has been some weakness in new homes volumes," Johan Svanstrom, the chief executive, said. "This has been going on for a little bit, but it really accelerated during the second quarter."

Between January and June, the company generated revenues of £225.8 million, up 7 per cent from £211.7 million in the first six months of 2025. Pre-tax profits rose 2 per cent to £149.1 million, up from £146.5 million.

MARKET REPORT

London has certainly become the place to be for equity investors. July not only produced stellar gains but did so against the backdrop of global tensions and domestic uncertainty as a new prime minister took charge.

Despite the drama, the more UK-focused FTSE 250, which fell by 104.12 points, or 0.4 per cent, yesterday to 23,975.02, produced a credible monthly gain of 4.2 per cent.

The FTSE 100 retreated by 29.22 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 10,868.05, its fifth-highest close in history after a monthly rise of 3.5 per cent.

IG Group was the worst blue-chip performer after the online trading platform bought the US fantasy sports and prediction markets operator Underdog for $1.3 billion. It fell by 14.4 per cent to £14.60.

Wall Street report

After a rocky start to the session, indices rebounded as good midweek results from Microsoft, up 2.3 per cent, followed by Amazon, up 14.9 per cent, drew investors back to AI-related stocks with a view that the big investments in tech were making decent returns. By early afternoon, the S&P 500 was up 41.55 points, or 0.6 per cent, at 7,479.43 while the Nasdaq was 201.51 points, or 0.8 per cent, higher at 25,327.08. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 264.34 points, or 0.5 per cent, at 52,475.23.

‘Without the Thatcher revolution, I would not be doing what I am now’

Malik Karim, founder of Fenchurch Advisory, saw Big Bang up close at the start of his career, he tells **Ben Martin**

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Malik Karim at Coq d’Argent, a favourite City haunt. His family fled from Idi Amin’s regime in Uganda in 1972 and “ended up on a council estate full of drug dealers”

The sun is shining in the Square Mile but Malik Karim is recounting what must have been the darkest day in his career as an investment banker.

It was 24 years ago and he had just been sacked by Credit Suisse. “I was very angry,” he recalls from our table at Coq d’Argent, the rooftop French restaurant a stone’s throw from the Bank of England. “I would have handled it differently today, but I was just shocked.”

Losing his job, however, would prove to be the making of him. Suddenly unemployed, he went on to set up his own business and now Fenchurch Advisory is one of the leading boutique, independent investment banks in the City, taking on the big bulge bracket firms.

If there’s a deal involving a financial services company, it’s a good bet that Fenchurch, which specialises exclusively in the sector, has a role on it. The firm, which Karim runs as its chief executive, is in the midst of an expansion into the United States, having struck a deal in June to merge with Broadhaven Capital Partners, a peer based in New York.

At the same time as building his business, Karim has been involved in the upper echelons of British politics, having served as Conservative Party treasurer between 2021 and 2022.

It’s all a far cry from his childhood as a refugee from Idi Amin’s Uganda who arrived in Britain at the age of 11 and “ended up in Leicester on a council estate full of drug dealers”. Karim has earned millions from Fenchurch, its latest accounts showing a £24.4 million profit pool with the largest share of £8.6 million going to its chief executive. In 2024 he received a £12 million slice of the profits.

He’s chosen Coq d’Argent for our lunch because it is one of his “four local haunts in the City”, with Fenchurch based in the Heron Tower skyscraper a ten-minute walk away. The restaurant is obviously a favourite of other Fenchurch bankers too, as two of Karim’s senior financiers appear at our table halfway through our meal to say hello to the “boss”.

We meet a fortnight after the Broadhaven deal was announced, which will expand Fenchurch from a firm with about 90 people in London, Paris and New York to almost 130, including a presence in Chicago. “We were knocking on Broadhaven’s door for a little while but I think the stars aligned and the fit is outstanding,” he tells me while we wait for our starters: prawns for him and crab with a couscous salad for me.

The merger significantly bulks up Fenchurch’s presence in the US, where the firm will be hoping to replicate the strong track record it has built in Britain and Europe. Its recent deal roster has included advising Athora, a European insurer backed by the US investment giant Apollo, on its £5.7 billion purchase of Britain’s Pension Insurance Corporation, while it was also involved in the £1.3 billion sale of Esure by Bain Capital to Ageas and the £780 million takeover of the Co-operative Bank by Coventry Building Society.

Has he thought about diversifying Fenchurch beyond advising financial services companies? “A lot of people have suggested that. The danger is financial services is a very specialist sector, very highly regulated,” he says, and has its own “rhythm” which is different from other sectors. That includes the pace of dealmaking. “There’s lots of transactions going on, some small, some mid-sized, some big,” he says, whereas in other sectors deals are “very large when they happen but they’re much less frequent”.

Perhaps the highest profile deal Fenchurch had a hand in recently was advising Hargreaves Lansdown, Britain’s biggest DIY investment platform, on its £5.4 billion sale to a group of private equity firms, which completed last year. This resulted in the delisting of what was a FTSE 100 company, one of a string of takeovers of London-quoted companies in recent years that have fuelled anxiety about Britain’s shrinking stock market, a contraction that potentially also erodes the City’s broader status as an international hub for finance. But Karim doesn’t see it that way.

“Hargreaves is still a great business, employs lots of people, who pay lots of taxes,” he says. “The City is much more than about listed companies.”

Indeed, he started his career in London in 1984 and so saw up close the Big Bang deregulation under Margaret Thatcher two years later which significantly expanded the City. “We still live off that,” he says.

The Square Mile is more diverse and meritocratic, too, than when he first arrived. Karim’s family fled to Britain in 1972 and passed through three refugee camps, in Somerset and Lincolnshire, before settling in Leicester. He later attended Gateway sixth form college, where the principal was the father of Andrew Bailey, now the Bank of England governor.

While Karim achieved an A in his economics A-level, he “bombed” the others, he recalls over our main courses, duck breast for him and coq au vin for me. But he nevertheless secured a place to study economics at the University of Manchester, after which he headed to the capital to become a trainee accountant at Arthur Andersen.

“In those days the majority of people funnelled into accounting and if they were any good they went into corporate finance,” he says. Keen for a career in the latter, his break came in 1990 when he joined Kleinwort Benson, where he spent almost seven years before moving to Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, an investment bank that was then bought by Credit Suisse in 2000. It was the bankers from DLJ who were for the chop when Credit Suisse began to make cuts. “The market had turned, there was surplus capacity in London.” Still, it took Karim by surprise when his turn came in 2002. “I like to think I was one of the better-performing bankers,” he says. “It felt bloody personal at the time, but I don’t think it was personal.”

He was nevertheless still in demand and some past clients had said to him “look, we need you back”. Unexcited by the job offers that he’d received, he took the advice of one of his clients who told him “just start your own place”, which he did in 2003 with three other dealmakers: Simon Yun-Farmbrough and Kevin Cunningham, who left Fenchurch in 2016, and Graham Marchant, who is still with the firm. In 2018 Natixis, the French bank, took a majority stake in the business and will continue to be a big backer after the Broadhaven tie-up.

It was his family’s experience in Uganda, where if you were Indian you were fair game — “people would want to take your things, steal from you, my father got beaten up” — that drew him into politics, because when “your community is uprooted, I think it would be very unnatural not to take an interest”.

He’s impressed by Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader — “I have to say, she has done fantastically,” he tells me over cappuccinos — and was “a huge fan” of Margaret Thatcher. “Without the Thatcher revolution I would not be doing what I’m doing and many other people in the City would not be doing what they’re doing.”

But how long will Karim keep going for? After all, he’s been in the City for 42 years, including the past 23 years building Fenchurch. He says he has “no current plans” to step back. “And by the way, you can imagine this was a question my future partners at Broadhaven were interested in.”

For one thing he “gave Natixis a handshake back in 2018, we did the deal, it was a ten-year thing”. And in any case, his wife would not enjoy having him around all the time, he jokes. “I’m very, very lucky to work with this group of people,” he says of Fenchurch. “I love what I do.”

CV

Age: 65
Education: Studied economics at the University of Manchester
Career: 1984-89 Arthur Andersen; 1990-97 Kleinwort Benson; 1997-2002 Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, including its 2000 takeover by Credit Suisse; 2003-present Fenchurch Advisory
Family: Married with two grown-up children

RECEIPT

4 x bouquet prawns	£26
Devon white crab and pearl couscous salad, avocado, Espelette sauce	£23
Coq au vin	£37
Duckling breast, caramelised peach, potato fondant, curried cauliflower	£34
2 x cappuccinos	£11
2 bottles sparkling water	£11.50
TOTAL	**£142.50**

Coq d’Argent, London EC2

THANK YOU!!

Hope Rehab Thailand: *journey to recovery*

At Hope, the aim is to provide affordable and quality care to people struggling with addiction. It offers a calm, supportive environment where individuals can explore their issues, including looking at and identifying unhelpful thought patterns and behaviours.When some people pick up alcohol or drugs, it is because they believe it offers a solution; an escape from a discomfort deep inside. However, this can quickly become a problem.

Building a positive belief system

Hope offers a chance to look at the deep discomfort within and learn new and healthier ways to cope. The program also focuses on building self-esteem and self-worth that comes from purpose and meaning in life, instead of reward-seeking behaviour as with substance misuse.

The staff at Hope often get asked about their success rate, and while they do their best to answer, ultimately they believe that it's down to the motivation of the client coming in. They can offer the best program in the world, but it's the client who will be doing the work. They can provide support, guidance and tools to support recovery, but it is the client's commitment and willingness that are essential.

Discovering healthier coping mechanisms

A member of the team will complete a telephone assessment with every incoming client so they know they're ready. Clients at Hope want to change; they are willing and open to the process. The Hope team doesn't expect clients to be happy every second of the day, but do ask that they work at this and learn from difficulties and challenges. There will be days where clients may think, *'this is amazing, why didn't I do it sooner?'*. And there will be days where they may be triggered in the group or receive news from home. These are what the Hope team calls *'Gift Days'*—days when clients get to use these triggers and discomfort to notice their reactions and see what needs to change. With Hope's help, clients can learn how to change so they no longer have to rely on substances.

Commitment to change

Staff at Hope are driven by a passion to help others who are struggling and have made it their lifetime mission. Start your recovery with the help of a supportive team of experts who care. **Recovery starts with Hope.** Hope reflects the attitude the team has on behalf of all its clients until they have it for themselves. Hope is important to instill in clients from the beginning. Hope is the seed of a positive belief system that will start to grow. Hope's counsellors put a great emphasis on developing a positive belief system in order to make sustainable changes.

BOOK HEALING CLASSES

- Individual counselling
- Daily therapeutic groups
- Recovery coaching
- Mindfulness coaching
- Aftercare groups & support
- Traditional Thai massage
- Muay Thai boxing training
- Island trips
- Temples & beaches
- Fitness & yoga
- Healthy eating & Thai cuisine

HOPE

REHAB *Thailand*

For a **free assessment & consultation,** contact our admissions:

enquiry@hoperehabthailand.com

hope-rehab-center-thailand.com

+66 950356951

Money

A £1m dilemma that reveals a lot about us
Johanna Noble, page 54

My London life — on £26k a year
Page 55

Scotland's wealth tax warning for the PM
Pages 56-57

How to pay for care (without losing your home)

As Andy Burnham becomes the latest prime minister to tackle the issue, we look at the choices available for funding social care. By **Rachel Mortimer**

Over the past 30 years there have been 22 attempts to fix the country's care crisis and every one has failed. All the while families have been left exposed to a care-cost lottery that can wipe out everything they've ever worked for.

Andy Burnham is hoping he will be 23rd time lucky. This week he pledged to do all he can to ensure that patients get the support and dignity they deserve with a radical shake-up of the system.

The new prime minister warned of "difficult decisions" to find the funding, with a 10 per cent levy on all estates or a 1.8 per cent extra charge on earnings reported to be under consideration.

However, any meaningful reform is still years away and, for now, the threat to your life savings and family home remains. Times Money looks at how much care in old age can cost — and what you can do to mitigate that and protect your wealth.

THE THREAT TO YOUR HOME

The average fee for a residential care home, with nursing, in the UK this year is £1,306 a week, or £67,912 a year, according to the health data analyst LaingBuisson.

In England and Northern Ireland those who need care qualify for funding from the local authority only if they have assets of less than £23,250; in Scotland the threshold is £36,750 and in Wales it is £50,000. Burnham, who said that "in an ideal world" no one would have to use their home to cover the cost, has pledged to hold cross-party talks on the reforms.

Boris Johnson promised in the 2019 Conservative Party manifesto that "nobody needing care should be forced to sell their home to pay for it".

Ed Davey, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, told Times Money: "The social care system works like an incredibly cruel lottery. You may have worked for your entire life so that you can leave something behind for your family when you die and then you get dementia and it's all gone. We need a care system that not only gives people the care they need, the dignity we all deserve, but also one that is fair."

Your home is often included in an assessment for state support — but not always. Anyone who gets care in their own home will not have it included in a financial assessment, and likewise if they are only going into a care home as a short-term temporary arrangement. If you are moving into a residential care or nursing home but certain family members, such as a spouse, a relative who is aged 60 or over or a dependant, still live in your home then it will also be excluded from a financial assessment.

When a council does include a home as part of an assessment for care funding it will do so at its market value at the time, minus any outstanding mortgage and 10 per cent of the value to allow for expenses when selling it.

If a local authority suspects that someone has deliberately transferred ownership of their home to someone else in an attempt to avoid it being included in a financial assessment, it will treat them as if they still owned the property. Councils can investigate those they believe may have intentionally reduced their level of savings and assets to qualify for care funding — a practice known as deliberate deprivation of assets.

Investigations can go back as far as 20 years and can include refusing funding or chasing residents and their family for repayments. The Sunday Times reported last year that more than 1,000 families were chased by councils to repay money they were suspected of giving away to avoid fees between 2021 and 2025.

Authorities have even been known to take families to court to force

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

Money

How to protect your home from care costs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

through the sale of homes that have been given away.

WILL A TRUST PROTECT ME?

Many families turn to trusts in the belief that they can spare them care fees. A trust is a legal arrangement that you can use to give away assets indirectly. It gives you more control over who gets the assets and when they get them, rather than simply handing over a gift in a will.

However, solicitors say these arrangements do not hold up to scrutiny and authorities can accuse you of deliberate deprivation of assets if you use one to avoid care costs.

David Steene from Steene Law Solicitors said: "A lot of these trusts are being sold by snake oil salesmen who are sophisticated in their techniques. Often families are paying between £4,000 and £10,000 for a few sheets of paper.

"The simple fact is if you have more than £23,250 in assets, you cannot avoid paying care fees."

10%

A proposed inheritance levy on all estates, one suggestion to help fund social care

HOW ELSE CAN YOU PAY?

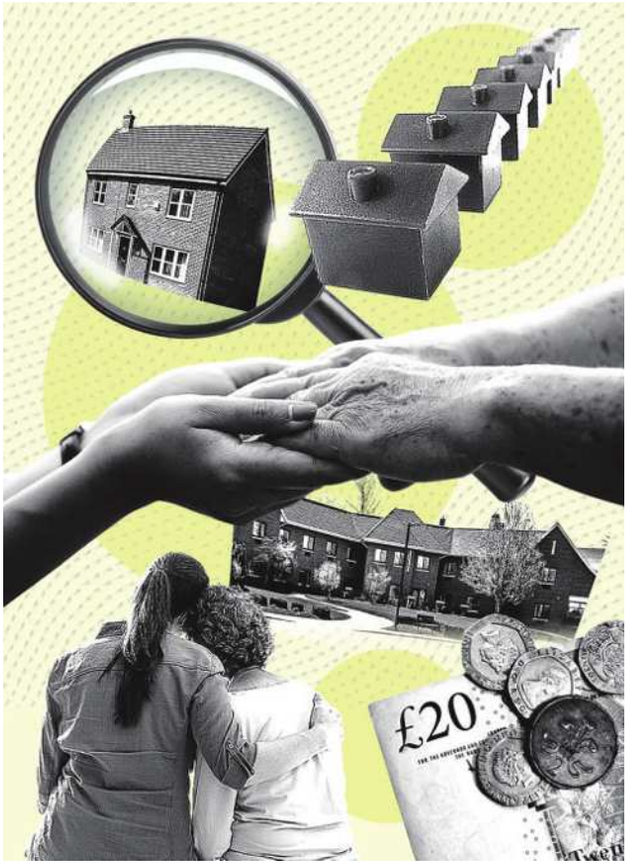
If you do not have enough income or liquid funds to pay care bills, there are still some alternatives to selling your home. For example, you could rent it out. Doing so could mean that the property's value continues to grow throughout your lifetime and may provide a bigger inheritance for any beneficiaries. But there are there are costs to consider, such as tax and management fees, plus the time-consuming regulations and responsibilities of being a landlord.

Lucie Spencer from the wealth manager Evelyn Partners said: "The income is taxable and very rarely does it cover the entire shortfall between someone's pension income and the cost of their care. Therefore, additional capital needs to be found from savings and investments, which can be difficult if the majority of wealth is within a property."

Spencer said those who wanted secure income, and peace of mind that they would not run out of money, could instead consider an immediate needs annuity — an insurance product that pays for your care-home fees for the rest of your life in exchange for an upfront lump sum.

They are medically underwritten and, unlike a pension annuity, the income is paid directly to the care home, so it is free of income tax. They are available to anyone who is paying for their own care at home, or in a care home, but they can be expensive and may not be suitable for everyone.

Spencer said: "You can add additional features such as annual increases in the amount paid out to cover care cost inflation. Such extras will mean you either accept a lower starting income for the same sum, or have to spend more." She warned that whether they are good value for money depends how long somebody lives. But they do offer "peace of mind" to families, she said.



DELAY THE BILL

Anyone unwilling to sell their home to pay for care can try to arrange a deferred payment plan with their local authority. This is where the council lends you the money for care, which is paid back with interest when your home is sold. Interest is charged at the UK gilt rate plus 0.15 percentage points, which is reviewed twice a year. At the moment it is 4.75 per cent, charged annually and compounded daily.

This is repaid when an estate is settled, usually within 90 days of death. If you sell your home while in care, the loan is repaid from the sale proceeds.

> "Rental income is taxable and rarely covers the shortfall in the cost of care

APPLY FOR FREE CARE

Seriously ill adults with complex health needs should be entitled to free care in their own home or a care or nursing home under what is known as NHS continuing healthcare in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland only patients receiving care or treatment in hospital or a specialist NHS unit qualify.

It is not means-tested but is notoriously hard to get, with a success rate for applicants of about 20 per cent. To qualify you must have a "primary health need" caused by an illness — it is not enough to just be old or frail — and in England applications are assessed by local boards, so what qualifies for funding in one area may not elsewhere, creating a postcode lottery.

The process can be long and gruelling. But if you or a loved one are denied funding, and genuinely believe you should qualify, you should appeal against the decision. Be prepared to fight for it and be armed with as much medical evidence as possible.

Has your family been affected by the care-cost crisis? Email rachel.mortimer@thetimes.co.uk

> "A lot of trusts are sold by snake oil salesmen. The simple fact is, if you have more than £23,250 you cannot avoid care fees

Guaranteed £50k, or a shot at £1m — what would you do?

Smarter with Money

Johanna Noble
Money Editor

Imagine you are offered a choice: a guaranteed £50,000 cash in hand or a 50-50 shot at £1 million. What do you do?

If you are like the vast majority of people, you'd take the £50,000 and run. A recent YouGov survey revealed that 73 per cent of UK adults would take the lump sum over the flip of a coin.

To a mathematician, this choice is economic insanity. The coin flip is worth £500,000 on average (0.5 x £1 million) so everyone should play for the million. What does this tell us — are we simply a nation of risk-averse cowards?

Not necessarily. In a high-inflation, high-interest-rate environment, turning down £50,000 is a luxury few of us can afford.

To clear £50,000 in net income, an average worker needs a gross salary of about £68,000. Add 5 per cent pension contributions and Plan 2 student loan repayments, and that figure climbs above £80,000 — a salary that puts you comfortably in the top 5 per cent of earners. For most people £50,000 is not pocket money, it is several years of scrimping and saving.

Everyone has a tipping point where taking the gamble becomes foolish. For most people £50,000 far exceeds that line. It's a house deposit, a couple of years of school fees or real financial breathing room. People grab the cash not out of cowardice but out of necessity.

If we dig deeper into the data, it also reveals some of the challenges that are facing different demographics. Take the generational split. While only 11 per cent of over-65s would flip the coin, 28 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds would be willing to take the gamble.

Older generations, sitting on most of the nation's wealth, might look at this as youthful recklessness. But for Gen Z, which includes a significant portion of Neets (not in education, employment or training), stagnant wages and astronomical housing costs mean that £50,000 is just a drop in the ocean.

When the old system, based on hard work and modest savings, feels rigged, playing for the £1 million starts to look like the only rational move.

The gender split is equally telling: 82 per cent of women choose the £50,000 guarantee, compared with 63 per cent of men. We could say this is because women are typically more risk averse but we need to look at the bigger picture. Women bear the brunt of the gender pay gap and face part-time penalties and pension shortfalls. For them, a guaranteed £50,000 is often worth more.

So what option would you go for? Choosing the £50,000 reveals something about you. If that money fundamentally changes your life, taking it is obvious. But if you already have a substantial buffer and still reach for the safe option, it suggests that your finances could be trapped in permanent defence mode — you're risk averse not out of necessity but out of habit.

When we launched our Smarter with Money campaign in February, a YouGov survey for The Times found that 73 per cent of people would still choose a savings account over investing, despite 44 per cent believing that their money would do better in stocks over five years. People aren't stupid. They know they should take more risk — but they're not doing so.

The real takeaway from the £50,000 v £1 million dilemma is that we need to learn to recognise when we can actually afford to take a chance — and when playing it safe is the biggest risk of all.

johanna.noble@thetimes.co.uk

TIMES POLL

We asked readers online, would you take the £50k or flip a coin for £1m? Here's how you voted

24% £50k

76% £1m

Take ideology out of it and consider the real cost of private school

Antonia Medlicott

You could be forgiven for comparing the VAT on school fees to Vote Leave's infamous battle bus: a policy sold on a headline number that hasn't survived contact with reality. More than 100 independent schools have closed since VAT arrived, pupil numbers are down, and the debate has turned emotional, understandably, because it's about children and communities, not just balance sheets.

But forget the politics for a moment. If you're a parent paying, or thinking about paying, private school fees, does the maths still work?

From January 1, 2025, 20 per cent VAT was applied to tuition and boarding fees. According to data from the Independent Schools Council (ISC), average day school fees rose 22.6 per cent in the 12 months to January 2025, from £6,021 to £7,382 a term. Nearly 70 per cent of day schools absorbed part of that hit themselves, so most families ended up facing a net rise closer to 14-16 per cent rather than the full 20 per cent. Small comfort if you're the one writing the cheque, but it's worth asking yours exactly how it split it.

The number of pupils at independent schools is down 30,000 since the policy began, taking numbers to their lowest in almost a decade, according to the ISC. And they aren't just numbers, they are children, displaced from their setting and friends.

The ISC chief executive, Julie Robinson, pointed out that 15 of the more than 100 schools that closed were mergers. Once you strip out special education needs and disabilities schools, which aren't taxed in the same way, the net loss last year was just over 60. The closures are real, but the headline number doesn't really reveal the full picture.

The government says its own figures show that more private schools opened than closed over the past school year, and the policy is on track to raise £1.8 billion a year for state education by 2029-2030, but that figure does not take into account the cost of absorbing displaced pupils. The Treasury's own costing nets off an estimated £300 million a year for the cost of pupils expected to move into the state sector.

The trouble is that the £300 million offset was built on an assumption that 35,000 to 37,000 pupils, about 6 per cent of the independent sector, would leave in the long run. The ISC data shows that the number who have already left is close to that entire "steady state" estimate years ahead of schedule. The Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think tank, was explicit that if 10-15 per cent of pupils move from private to state education, the additional state-sector cost could wipe out the net revenue gain.

Average day fees are about £23,000 to £25,500 a year, with boarding about £50,000 to £55,000. A family starting reception this year at an average-priced school is looking at roughly £410,000 by the time their child finishes sixth form. At a sought-after London day school, that figure climbs towards £670,000. Multiply by two, or add boarding, and the sum is way above a second mortgage.

Here are a few practical questions a fee-paying parent should ask.

Is the fee fixed or will it keep rising ahead of inflation? Historically, fees have risen 3-6 per cent a year, even without VAT. Ask your school what its multi-year fee trajectory looks like.

Does it have a bursary? Many schools significantly expanded means-tested bursary programmes to retain families who might otherwise leave. If you haven't asked, you don't know whether you qualify.

Are you paying out of income or eating into savings and investments that were meant for something else? This is the conversation I have most often with families under fee pressure. A Junior Isa, for instance, is useful for building a fund for later years of schooling but it isn't a mechanism for meeting this term's bill. Don't let a short-term cash-flow problem raid a long-term savings pot.

What is the state alternative where you live? For many families the private school is still worth the sacrifice but for others, particularly since VAT, the sums no longer support that conclusion.

None of this is a comment on whether VAT on school fees was the right policy. But the decision in front of most parents isn't a referendum on government policy. It's a household budgeting question, and it deserves the same unsentimental treatment you'd give any five or six-figure commitment.

Antonia Medlicott is the founder of the personal finance site Investing Insiders

'I live on £26k in London and can still afford to invest'

A tight budget and money-saving apps are key to financial survival in the capital, says **Jack Simpson**

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Claudia Sugarman's income as an intern is far below the London average of £49,692

You need an income of at least £54,000 to live a comfortable life in inner London, a report by the charity Trust for London found. But Claudia Sugarman, 26, lives happily in the capital on less than half this — and even has enough left over to invest. After moving from Cardiff in 2024, Sugarman worked as a supervisor on a make-up counter in Harrods, earning £32,000. Seeking a career change, she landed an internship with a marketing company on a gross salary of £25,000 a year, well below the £49,692 the average worker in London earns, according to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, official data published by the Office for National Statistics.

"I was living with students, so I was the sole council taxpayer, and I was thinking, 'I just don't know if I can do it'," said Sugarman, who lives in Wandsworth and pays £900 a month in rent. She took the job and decided to document her financial survival on Instagram and TikTok. Her salary, now £26,000 a year, equates to a take-home pay of just over £1,800 a month after tax and student loan repayment. About £1,100 of this is spent on bills and rent, but she still sets aside £100 to invest each month. This leaves her with £600 to spend, which she diligently plots out on her spreadsheet every month, and shares with her 21,000 followers.

"When I was at uni, I wouldn't think anything of buying lunch at the library or spending money on drinks. I definitely didn't have a spreadsheet or anything. I wish I had," she said.

According to the latest figures from Trust for London, the earnings needed to reach a minimum income level are £54,400 in inner London and £48,200 in outer London, compared with just £30,500 in the average UK city outside London. The minimum income standard follows a model designed by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University, based on hundreds of detailed conversations with Londoners regarding what a decent standard of living entails. It assumes inner Londoners' monthly spend is £1,651 on rent, £313 on transport and £1,398 on other items, including food and leisure. The £3,362 total far exceeds the £2,041 average cost outside London, according to the trust.

1.6m

The number of childless adults who are earning below the minimum income standard in London

An adequate standard of living assumes a one-bedroom private rented flat, a monthly travelcard (£246), and £45 a month to eat out. This also includes a seven-day UK holiday outside peak times, and £185 spending money. But for Sugarman, one of the essentials is a £100 monthly investment into a Vanguard global index fund. She said: "Initially, I was quite scared of the idea that money could go up and down, but I committed to it. Since I opened it two years ago, the rate of return has been 57.5 per cent, and I've made £915."

With the money she has left she spends £50 on drinks, £45 on eating out, £140 on groceries, and £230 on travel. She also sets aside £20 for health and beauty and £15 for coffee. This month, she is also trying to save for a holiday to Greece next month.

To cut down the grocery bill she buys loose or frozen vegetables, bulk cooks often, and never buys lunch out at work. She also walks to save money on transport, her biggest expense.

"I would say a good rule of thumb for me is if somewhere is 45 minutes or less away, I try to walk to where I need to go," she said.

Sugarman is one of 1.6 million childless working-age adults earning below the minimum income standard in the capital, according to Trust for London, up 1.2 million in 2012-13.

There are four million Londoners living below the minimum standard of living, including nearly 900,000 parents, 1.1 million children and 380,000 pensioners. A couple with two children, one under two and one in primary school, would need an income of £98,900 between them for a minimum standard of living in inner London, according to the report. A pensioner couple would need £37,580.

Sugarman has signed up to loyalty card schemes and uses money-saving apps. This includes Paace, which lets you earn free coffees, meals or cut-price gym classes the more you walk. She uses First Table when she goes out for dinner, which can give discounts of up to 50 per cent if you book at an earlier time. She cuts her own hair and goes to car boot sales to buy clothes. She is also a regular seller of clothes on Vinted, earning between £60 and £100 a month.

While London is the most expensive city in the UK to live in, Sugarman believes it is the best for free activities. She said: "You've got access to so many free museums and galleries, we are really lucky. I often use TikTok for inspiration: people post about what is free to do in London this weekend, and where you can get two-for-one drinks."

Sugarman says some months she does overspend, but believes that by posting about her experiences online, she keeps herself accountable, and also helps people. "People comment on my stuff and say, 'This is so sad, you should move out of London,' but I am having a great time. I also get people who say, you've inspired me to take that internship or move because you've shown me it's possible."

Money

Scotland's failed wealth tax experiment is a stark warning to Andy Burnham

Income and property taxes focused on the top earners, but the revenue hasn't followed, finds **Alice Wright**

Scotland has made a concerted effort to squeeze its highest earners and the asset-rich in recent years. However, instead of collecting more tax, the government has been left with less.

Economists are warning that the unintended consequences of a wealth tax raid could next play out in England and Wales if Andy Burnham looks to raise taxes to fund his spending pledges.

The move to increase income tax for higher earners in Scotland, it has emerged, cost the devolved government £22 million in a year, according to analysis by the independent think tank Tax Policy Associates. Holyrood increased its top band of income tax, paid by those earning over £125,140, from 45 per cent to 48 per cent in the 2024-25 tax year. It also applied an "advanced" rate of 45 per cent on earnings between £75,000 and £125,140. In the rest of the UK the 45 per cent rate only applies to earnings over £125,140.

But it hasn't brought in the windfall the government expected, becoming instead the latest in a series of anti-wealth tax policies in Scotland to come under fire. It comes after new prime minister Burnham has spoken in favour of increasing the top rate of income tax in England and Wales from 45 per cent to 50 per cent.

WHY DIDN'T IT WORK?

Instead of raking in more money from the well-off to fund public services as promised, Scotland's income tax increase led higher earners to take steps to avoid the 48 per cent rate. This includes turning down pay rises, reducing working hours or making greater use of salary sacrifice schemes such as pensions to bring down their taxable income. In more extreme cases, workers have moved south of the border into England and refused to take jobs in Scotland.

This behaviour is known as the Laffer curve, named after the economist Arthur Laffer, for his theory that once taxes reach a certain level they bring in less revenue because people are so motivated to avoid paying them.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (Icas) said that the difference in taxation between Scotland and the rest of Britain threatened its "competitiveness, investment appeal and long-term tax base".

Gail Boag, the chief executive of Icas, said: "We have warned for several years that Scotland could be approaching a tipping point, where growing tax divergence from the rest of the UK begins to influence decisions about where people choose to live, work and invest.

"Analysis suggesting the 48p top rate may have raised less revenue than expected underlines why that warning matters. Scotland simply cannot afford to treat tax competitiveness as a secondary issue if it wants to protect its tax base and support economic growth."

Income tax in Scotland versus the rest of the UK

Salary	Scotland	UK	Scotland relative to UK
£12,571 - £15,397	19%	20%	-1%
£15,398 - £27,491	20%	20%	0%
£27,492 - £43,662	21%	20%	1%
£43,663 - £50,270	42%	20%	22%
£50,271 - £75,000	42%	40%	2%
£75,000 - £100,000	45%	40%	5%
£101,000 - £125,140	45%	40%	5%
Over £125,140	48%	45%	3%

Source: ICAS

COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS

It is not the first time that attempts to impose "progressive" tax measures on the wealthiest payers in Scotland have stalled. Last year the Scottish government voted to allow its 32 councils to charge second-home owners unlimited council tax. Councils then went on a spree of high charges.

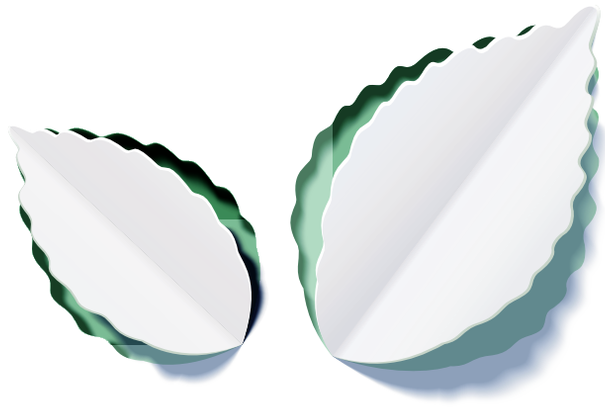
Highland council began charging 300 per cent extra on second homes in April, meaning that owners now pay quadruple bills. The council said it could increase this charge to 350 per cent next year and 400 per cent the year after.

Councils in England have been able to charge a 100 per cent council tax premium for second-home owners since April 2025. Yet the property firm Colliers International estimated that tax receipts were down £383 million a year as a result.

PAPER
LOVES TREES

European forests, which provide wood for making paper, paper packaging and many other products, have been growing by 1,500 football pitches every day!

Two Sides Analysis of FAO data, 2005-2020
European Forests: EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and the UK



Discover the story of paper
www.lovepaper.org
Scan for paper facts, activities, blogs and much more!

LOVE PAPER®

> Growing tax divergence from the UK could begin to influence where people choose to live, work and invest

> Politicians are trying to take more money off people who have already been heavily taxed to buy homes in the first place

This is because second-home owners are avoiding the charge by making their homes available as holiday lets instead and thereby paying business rates instead of council tax, which is often lower.

John Webber from Colliers International said: "The answer is the same wherever the increased council tax policy on second homes is implemented. What they've done in Scotland is clearly going to lead to less tax intake.

"I don't blame homeowners for reacting to the enormous incentive to avoid these taxes, I blame politicians for trying to take more and more money off people who have already been heavily taxed on the money they have used to buy these homes in the first place. It panders to a class war agenda but we've been here before and it doesn't work."

Although no official figures are yet available for the impact of increased council tax on second homes in Scotland, Webber expects the drop to be similar to that in England.

STAMP DUTY SQUEEZE

Scotland's equivalent of stamp duty, the tax you pay when you buy a home or property, is the land and buildings transaction tax. On both sides of the border the rate increases with a property's value and is applied only to the portion of the price within each band. The thresholds and rates differ but the Scottish land tax generally offers more favourable terms for lower-priced properties and becomes significantly more expensive for higher-value purchases.

For example, Scotland charges a 12 per cent tax on the value of a property over £750,000 but in England, Northern Ireland and Wales that rate only applies at prices of £1.5 million or above.

On top of this Scotland raised its additional dwelling supplement — its equivalent of a second-home stamp duty surcharge — from 6 per cent to 8 per cent in December 2024. The tax intake for the additional dwelling supplement has fallen almost 3 per cent so far this year, compared with the same period last year, from £129.5 million to £125.7 million, according to figures published by Revenue Scotland.

The Scottish government also targeted landlords with temporary rent controls in September 2022, as part of emergency legislation to help with the cost of living. In April 2023 rent increases were capped at 3 per cent for 12 months.

However, the move motivated landlords to make the maximum rent increases they were permitted every year. Last year 67 per cent of landlords in Scotland increased rents, well above the average of 58 per cent across Great Britain, according to the estate agency Hamptons.

David Fell from Hamptons said: "The evidence from Scotland suggests that rent controls rarely work as intended. At best they delay rent increases, at worst they set a benchmark where landlords feel compelled to increase their rents every year by the maximum allowed."

WILL BURNHAM TAKE NOTICE?

The prime minister has so far refused to rule out a wealth tax or further measures to hit the better off. Indeed, he told the former footballer and broadcaster Gary Lineker he may "ask for a little bit more". Lineker is one of the Patriotic Millionaires, a group that is calling for a 2 per cent tax on wealth over £10 million.

Burnham has also hinted that he favours tax cuts for lower earners through potentially raising the personal allowance, the £12,570 you can earn tax-free each year, which has been frozen since 2021.

Boag warned: "Any proposals should be assessed not only on the revenue they are expected to generate, but also on their potential impact on taxpayer behaviour."

AI needn't be a threat, it could help to boost your career

Charlotte Ransom
Investment expert

Last month every employee at our company spent a day learning how to make more effective use of artificial intelligence. I came away full of ideas about efficiency and productivity. However, what struck me most was a different question: will AI give today's young adults the greatest career advantage any generation has enjoyed in decades?

Wealth management is a deeply human business. We deal with people, families and personal situations. By contrast, AI is not conscious, it doesn't grasp meaning or context the way humans do. It can be overconfident and sometimes plain sycophantic. Yet it can relieve us of some of the routine and repetitive aspects of work. It can free people up to spend more time on the things that matter: relationships, trust, judgment and creativity.

What struck me was not simply what AI could do for experienced professionals. It was what it could mean for those starting out. The next workforce divide may not be between graduates and non-graduates, between industries or income groups. It may be between those who can effectively harness AI and those who can't. For young adults that distinction may shape the course of their careers. AI is transforming entry-level work. Tasks that once acted as a training ground, such as research, analysis and drafting are being automated or augmented by AI systems. That sounds like a threat. But it may also be an opportunity. When used well, it enables young professionals to accelerate their learning, access expertise more quickly and develop capabilities that once took years to acquire. And this is where I believe the advantage will begin to show. Younger workers are more likely to approach AI with curiosity, integrating it into how they learn and work from an early stage. By contrast, older cohorts may take a more measured approach, mindful of trust, accuracy and disruption.

AI rewards adaptability, and adaptability is becoming one of the most valuable currencies in the workplace. Those who learn early and continuously are likely to enjoy a compounding advantage over time.

This isn't about becoming a programmer or technical expert. It is about understanding how to ask better questions, to direct intelligent systems and how to apply them responsibly to real-world situations. By the end of our workshop, even those with no technical background had built their own simple AI agents, capable of drafting emails, organising workflows and summarising complex information. Yet this comes with an important challenge. The more administrative and analytical tasks AI can perform are precisely the tasks through which previous generations learnt their trade. So organisations will need to find new ways to develop judgment, experience and expertise.

The future workplace will reward those who can learn fast, adapt quickly and work most intelligently alongside machines. Young people with AI fluency will not just catch up quickly, they may leap ahead.

Charlotte Ransom is the founder and chief executive of the wealth management firm Netwealth

Money

Investment Eye

Everyone's buying British — except us

There's so much to like about domestic stocks, says **Ben Kumar**

About a month ago I was on an investment panel. A couple of the other guests were fund managers whose remit is European companies, including the UK. One manager was a Brit and based here, the other was European and worked from Geneva. The Brit had almost no money invested in UK stocks and the European had nearly half their portfolio invested here.

It made me wonder if we're doing too good a job of talking ourselves down. Dysfunctional politics; lack of growth; trains are late; heatwaves; potholes; GP waiting times; short-termism; the price of a beer; trains again. These themes — and many others — make up a familiar refrain for most of us when discussing the UK. Dive into the comments section of this and I bet you'll see at least one mentioned. It's a disheartening picture that we paint.

Maybe we're whingeing about the trees and not realising how impressive the forest is. Perhaps the traditional British sense of irony and self-deprecation — an American friend still can't believe "not bad" is our highest compliment — has now descended into outright pessimism.

Because, like my Swiss fund manager, the investment world is snapping up British assets wherever it can find them. There's a bidding war going on for easyJet, while Tate & Lyle and the facilities management company Mitie have already announced acquisitions by US-backed bidders. And the valve expert Rotork will soon be part of the Swiss engineering giant ABB. And these are just the big names.

In 2026 overseas buyers and private equity firms have already been on a London shopping spree. According to Bloomberg, mergers and acquisitions involving UK-listed businesses have already exceeded $60 billion, the most for more than a decade with nearly half the year yet to come.

The Eeyoreish view is that this is a problem for the London stock market: it'll shrink and shrink until nothing's left and everything is owned by foreign money and the UK is doomed to become a subsidiary.

Yet Warren Buffett's long-term business partner, Charlie Munger, advised "invert, always invert" when thinking about a problem. When you flip the perspective, you end up asking what has caught the eye of the world about UK assets. They aren't seeing the potholes or the cancelled trains.

After all, Britain attracts more financial and professional services foreign direct investment projects than any other country in Europe, about the same as France and Germany combined. Deutsche Bank research notes that the UK ranks third globally for private AI investment, after the US and China.

Some things are obvious. Britain is the world's sixth-largest economy, so there are plenty of customers. London is still one of the world's leading financial centres and conveniently located when it comes to time zones.

Investors also benefit from advantages that are easy to overlook, precisely because they've existed for so long: a trusted legal system, a global language, deep capital markets and a business environment that is easier to navigate than much of the developed world.

When foreign investors look at Britain, they don't see delayed trains and hosepipe bans. They see intellectual property, legal protections, world-class universities, deep capital markets and highly profitable companies.

For foreign investors who are comfortable with the fundamentals above, there are then two different kinds of UK companies, with slightly different investment rationales. Two different trades.

The first is the opportunity to buy decent global businesses that are at a discount to peers (especially those in the US) due to being listed in London. It's the equivalent of buying a fantastic house that doesn't have a prestigious postcode, despite being near the station and in the catchment area for the best schools. Data and analytics businesses like Relx or indeed London Stock Exchange Group make less than 15 per cent of their money in the UK, yet suffer compared with US equivalents. The same is true of oil companies, banks, pharmaceuticals and many more. Investors abroad expect that gap to close, either through price gains or through mergers with US competitors.

The second opportunity is investing in more domestically focused businesses (typically found in smaller companies in the FTSE 250), which are priced as if Britain is facing a permanent economic decline. If that proves not to be the case — if confidence and growth return, turning the structural advantages mentioned earlier into springboards — then the upside could be significant.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the FTSE 250 was valued at about 20 times forward earnings (on average), compared with 13 times today. Real economic growth then was about 3 per cent: higher than now but hardly inconceivable or out of reach. Even a hint of a return towards those conditions could have a meaningful impact on valuations and hence returns. We don't have to go full Tigger; simply not being entirely Eeyore would do the job.

> The UK ranks third globally for private AI investment, after the US and China

Investors who share that view needn't pick individual winners. The Legal & General UK Mid Cap Fund tracks the FTSE 250, while excluding investment trusts, offering exposure to exactly the kind of domestically focused businesses most geared to a recovery in confidence and growth. By stripping out investment trusts, which make up more than a third of the standard FTSE 250 index, investors get closer to the underlying UK economy.

While we are still stuck looking at the potholes, foreign investors are focused on the road ahead — and what they're seeing has them pressing the accelerator on UK assets.

Ben Kumar is a head of strategy at the investment firm 7IM

Price to earnings ratio of the FTSE 250

PE ratios were distorted by COVID, lasting from 2020 through to 2023. Source: 7IM, FactSet

Foreign landlords behind one in five new buy-to-let businesses

Jack Simpson

One in five new buy-to-let businesses in the UK are being set up by overseas landlords.

Figures from the estate agency Hamptons show that 27,200 buy-to-let companies were set up in the first six months of the year and 19.5 per cent of those had at least one non-UK director — 56 per cent higher than the same period in 2016, when the figure was 12.5 per cent.

Indian investors accounted for the highest proportion of directors, followed by Nigerians and then Irish.

David Fell from Hamptons said: "While overall numbers of buy-to-let company creations are levelling off at between 4,000 and 5,000 a month following years of rapid expansion, international engagement in the UK private rented sector remains historically high. Crucially, however, buy-in is largely driven by non-UK nationals who are living in the UK, rather than overseas investors.

Owning properties through a company has tax benefits

"For those investing from abroad, personal ownership remains the preferred vehicle, given many overseas tax regimes tend to be more generous than HMRC regarding how they treat rental income."

Using companies to purchase buy-to-lets has become increasingly popular in recent years, as it provides significant tax benefits. Landlords who hold property in their own name get a tax credit on their mortgage interest at the 20 per cent basic income tax rate, but those who own through a corporate structure can deduct 100 per cent of their borrowing costs from their tax bill.

Hamptons estimates that about 75 per cent of new buy-to-let purchases are held within company structures. Nearly 67,000 buy-to-let companies were set up last year, up from 10,239 in 2015. The make-up of nationalities using this method to invest in UK properties has shifted eastwards in the past decade due to immigration flows partially driven by Brexit.

In 2016 the list was dominated by English-speaking nationalities and those from western Europe.

Then Irish became the nationality with the highest proportion of shareholders in newly created businesses, with 1.5 per cent of all directors. Chinese were second, Indians were third, while the list also included Germans, French, Italians, Americans and Australians.

> Many overseas tax regimes are more generous than HMRC over rental income

This year's list puts Indians at the top with 1.69 per cent of all directors, while the list also includes Nigerians, Romanians, Pakistanis and Lithuanians.

Marc von Grundherr from the London estate agent Benham and Reeves said he had "seen a noticeable increase in interest from Turkish buyers".

This year was the first time since 2015 that the proportion of non-UK shareholder directors had fallen in a decade, from a high of 20.4 per cent of shareholders being from overseas last year.

Your Money Matters Holly Thomas

We were turned away from our £3k flight with no explanation

Our consumer champion gets to grips with your problems

In March we paid Booking.com £3,194 for premium economy flights from Auckland to London via San Francisco, scheduled for March 16 with Air New Zealand. We received booking confirmation and e-tickets and our seat selection was confirmed on the airline's app. On attempting to check in online the night before our departure we were instructed to check in at the airport and told seats would be allocated then.

At Auckland airport we were told we weren't on the passenger list. After protracted phone calls between Air New Zealand staff, Booking.com and Virgin Atlantic (a flight partner), during which each party blamed the other and none admitted responsibility, we were denied boarding and asked to leave the check-in area. No assistance was provided to arrange alternative travel.

We found a hotel and booked the next available flights, departing on March 21 at a cost of £3,100 in economy class, and incurred additional costs of just over £1,000 for accommodation, subsistence, transport to and from the airport, tickets for missed onward travel from London to Newcastle and replacement rail fares. Booking.com has said that our case had been escalated but there has been no resolution.

I have written twice to the chief executive of Booking.com's parent company, copying in customer services, but I have had no acknowledgment or response. We are both 71 and found the experience extremely distressing and dispiriting.
John, Northumberland

HOLLY THOMAS WRITES

I was sorry to hear of this rather stressful end to your time in New Zealand. You had been to visit your son who lives there with his wife and three young children.

You told me you had originally been due to fly home with Qantas via Dubai but you cancelled the flights due to the conflict in the Middle East. Worryingly, by the fourth additional day of waiting for the later flight your wife had run out of her regular medication, posing a potential risk to her health.

Air New Zealand told you that Booking.com was to blame but wouldn't provide you with any paperwork as evidence. You tried and failed to get Booking.com to reimburse you for the missed flights. I had a similar experience in my investigations. I asked Booking.com to review your complaint and it told me an overbooking by the airline was to blame. But when I spoke to Air New Zealand (which uses Virgin Atlantic flights as a partner) it claimed it hadn't oversold the flight. It said you didn't hold a confirmed seat because the seat Booking.com sold you was not available to be purchased.

The good news is that I managed to negotiate a refund for you from Booking.com, which agreed to pay you the £3,194 for the unused flights. It wouldn't pay for the expenses incurred due to the delay to your journey home. Fortunately your travel insurer stepped in and agreed to pay for your accommodation, subsistence and additional travel costs, which totalled £1,995.

Booking.com said: "Upon review, all tickets were successfully issued and this appears to be an overbooking by the airline. We have requested a refund from the airline for the original booking but to prevent any further delay Booking.com is processing the refund for the unused tickets as a gesture of goodwill."

Air New Zealand said: "We are sorry to hear about this experience and appreciate how disappointing and stressful this would have been. Based on our investigation, the booking was made when the fare was not available to be sold by the third party, meaning Air New Zealand did not overbook this flight. Although travel documents were received from the third party, the couple did not have a confirmed booking for this service."

This case highlights the benefits of booking directly with an airline. Any issue or changes to your flights would then be its responsibility. It is also a very good reminder of the importance of travel insurance, which saved you a lot of money.

£1,579,001
– what Your Money Matters has saved readers this year

If you have a money issue
write to
yourmoneymatters
@thetimes.co.uk

Getting runaround over faulty robot vac

In March 2025 we bought a vacuum cleaner from Roborock UK for £1,330, paid by credit card. In November the automatic emptying function failed. Since reporting the fault we have been in a frustrating process with Roborock and American Express. We want the machine repaired, replaced or refunded. We engaged in extensive correspondence with Roborock and provided videos and other evidence at its request. We were asked to return the entire system. Roborock twice agreed to send packaging but this never arrived. It also provided tracking numbers which were not recognised by the courier.

Given the lack of progress, we submitted a claim to American Express under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. It requested that we obtain an independent assessment of the machine from an approved specialist. We are not aware of anyone who would do this. As a result we appear to have reached an impasse. Please can you help?
Gillian, Wiltshire

HOLLY THOMAS WRITES

Roborock specialises in automated cleaning devices. You splashed out on the Roborock Saros 10. Not only does this vacuum floors all by itself, it can wash them too. The vacuum works well but the contents of the dustbin are no longer transferred into the waste bag in the docking station. Having to empty it manually goes against the point of paying for an automated device.

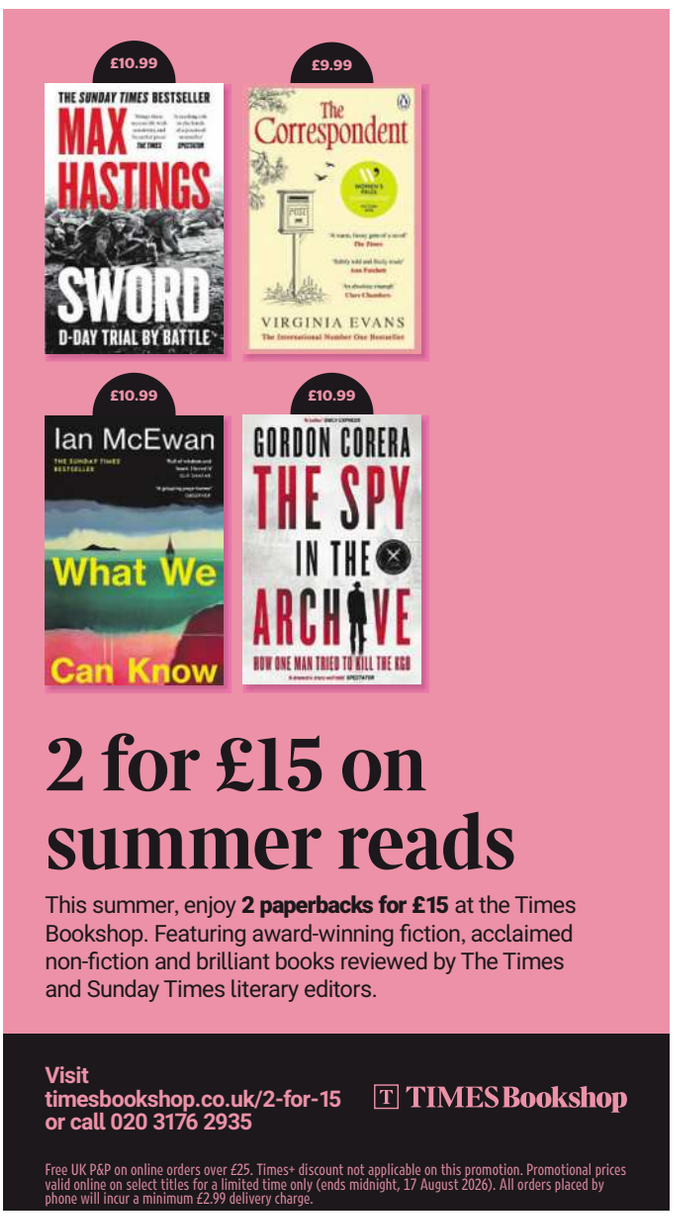
I went to the manufacturer to ask for a solution. It took me a while to get a response but eventually I found someone who got things moving. Roborock has agreed to process a refund and has apologised for not resolving things faster.

It offered a bundle of accessories as a gesture of goodwill, which you declined. Roborock then offered to collect the device and repair it free of charge, leaving you with a refund and a repaired robot cleaner.

You said: "We are grateful for your intervention and thankful for the refund. The process would have worn us out without your help."

Roborock said: "We recognise this service fell below our standards, and we are reviewing our internal processes to ensure a better experience for customers."

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 states if a fault occurs in the first six months you can ask the retailer to repair or replace your item. If it is detected after six months you are entitled to a repair or replacement but the burden of proof switches to the consumer. This is why a report might be necessary. Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act offers a safety net for losses between £100 and £30,000 via your credit card.



Money Unit trusts

Unit trust and open-ended investment company prices

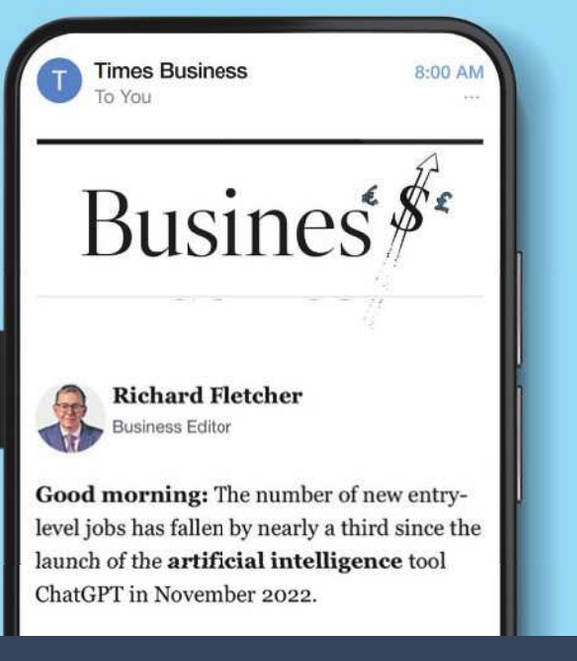
	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS				
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573				
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	130.01	...	+0.92	8.11
UK Equity A ‡	394.54	...	+7.83	4.00
UK Growth ‡	10141.31	...	+235.34	2.28
ARTEMIS FUND MGRS				
0800 092 2051				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	371.66	...	+3.09	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	212.29	...	+1.77	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	226.27	...	+0.97	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.71	...	+0.29	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	814.12	...	+14.87	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	312.04	...	+5.70	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	91.27	...	+0.22	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	887.26	...	+19.53	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	673.62	...	+1.76	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4296.58	...	+56.37	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	94.25	...	-1.70	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	115.90	...	+0.56	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.40	...	+0.26	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	115.70	...	+0.56	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.50	...	+0.26	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1328.06	...	+29.17	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2298.85	...	+39.94	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1092.88	...	+22.20	...
AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT				
Dlng: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511				
Health ‡	3310.00	...	+8.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2139.00	...	+50.00	1.15
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	321.20	...	...	0.38
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	236.50	...	+5.10	1.15
AXA FUND MANAGERS				
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808				
UK/Global Investment Companies				
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.10	...	...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.30	...	...	1.51
CIS UNIT MANAGERS				
08457 46 46 46				
European Growth ‡	294.20	...	+6.10	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡@	1026.00	...	+13.00	1.48
UK Growth ‡	891.60	...	+20.10	1.71
UK Income ‡@	260.40	...	+5.40	3.92
CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT				
Dealing 020 7426 6232				
Winchester ‡	5513.68	...	+38.02	0.62
COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083				
Share Class 1-Retail				
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1597.00	...	+12.00	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	598.90	...	+13.70	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	393.50	...	+3.20	...
Strategic Bd ‡	227.60	...	+0.90	0.70
EDENTREE INV MGMT				
0800 358 3010				
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	489.30	...	+15.00	1.77
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	452.00	...	+6.30	0.55
Sust Mgd Income ‡	142.00	...	+1.50	4.72
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	84.82	...	+0.20	4.98
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡	254.40	...	+1.80	1.63
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	323.70	...	+7.80	1.42
FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL				
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181				
Amer Spec ‡	2876.00	...	-4.00	...
American ‡	7721.00	...	-55.00	...
Euro Opps ‡	731.40	...	+9.10	0.49
European ‡	4358.00	...	+65.00	0.78
Global Focus ‡	3597.00	...	-3.00	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.38	...	+0.04	6.58
Global Special Sits ‡	8780.00	...	+85.00	...
Japan ‡	963.40	...	-16.20	0.34
Moneybldr Bal ‡	49.03	...	+0.09	0.60
Moneybldr Inc ‡	28.21	...	+0.14	5.30
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡	202.53	...	+4.59	2.47
Special Sits ‡	7404.00	...	+116.00	1.67
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	105.20	...	+2.70	1.43
HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS				
01296 386 386				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Share Class C				
Corporate Bond ‡	37.21	...	+0.12	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	211.50	...	+1.20	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	109.00	...	+2.70	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	120.80	...	+2.90	...
HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)				
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6				
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)				
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1582.00	...	-7.00	0.80
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1840.00	...	+28.00	2.30
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1066.00	...	+16.00	2.35
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	443.50	...	+10.30	2.48
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	180.00	...	+4.20	2.63
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	401.10	...	+7.50	2.93
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	217.50	...	+4.10	2.92
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1114.00	...	+26.00	2.65
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	501.00	...	+11.60	2.79
Japan Ind Acc ‡	229.20	...	+2.60	1.47
Japan Ind Inc ‡	166.30	...	+1.80	1.51
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1041.00	...	+1.00	1.59
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	589.20	...	+0.80	1.61
HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class				
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	310.70	...	+1.00	4.30
Income Acc ‡	1062.00	...	...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	402.10	...	+6.50	3.32
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.40	...	...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.90	...	...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	224.80	...	+3.70	2.99
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	87.14	...	+1.43	3.05
HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)				
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1219.00	...	-5.00	0.78
INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD				
Dlng:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677				
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121				
Invesco Funds				
Corp Bond ‡	230.62	...	+0.59	4.03
High Income Dis ‡	431.71	...	+4.96	3.16
Income & Growth Dis ‡	507.33	...	+9.58	3.08
Income Inc ‡	1660.53	...	+23.46	2.88
Money Acc ‡	107.73	...	+0.10	3.62
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.48	...	+0.05	5.78
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1397.10	...	+36.35	1.47
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1329.79	...	+20.29	1.45
INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD				
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900				
OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv				
American A Acc ‡	836.55	...	+26.79	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	468.65	...	+3.78	2.63
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	268.45	...	+2.27	2.49
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	324.91	...	+2.87	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	119.52	...	+1.04	0.97
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	375.06	...	+1.25	3.80
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.88	...	+0.23	5.19
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡	110.71	...	+0.61	6.00
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	46.57	...	+0.27	7.70
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡	289.72	...	+3.24	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1224.84	...	+28.02	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	301.23	...	+10.41	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	398.53	...	+13.55	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2068.70	...	+24.68	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	481.85	...	+4.50	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	516.43	...	+17.83	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	397.73	...	+13.68	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2704.07	...	+106.08	1.04
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	929.95	...	+36.48	1.05
For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)				
JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS				
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646				
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.20	...	+0.50	4.40
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	100.90	...	+1.56	5.40
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	357.50	...	+4.00	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.90	...	+1.80	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1320.00	...	+18.00	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	299.50	...	+3.10	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3227.00	...	+37.00	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	93.06	...	+0.08	6.10
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6390.00	...	-12.00	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	87.70	...	+2.16	2.40
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6760.00	...	-179.00	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	179.44	...	+4.22	2.20
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	186.00	...	+0.10	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	331.10	...	+2.60	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	160.30	...	+0.60	2.70
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	229.70	...	+0.90	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	228.80	...	+1.00	4.40
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.26	...	+0.24	4.40
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.26	...	+0.31	5.80
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.80	...	-0.20	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	199.00	...	+5.00	1.30
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2879.00	...	-47.00	...
J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT				
OEIC				
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡	713.10	...	+15.60	2.49
JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD				
020 7581 3020				
Distribution & Growth ‡	122.77	...	+1.38	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	593.62	...	+12.32	0.71
European ‡	3950.44	...	+82.64	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1326.96	...	+13.76	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	426.91	...	-0.07	3.39
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	341.78	...	+6.87	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	819.10	...	+14.20	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	465.23	...	+2.82	3.47
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	598.23	...	+9.54	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	291.44	...	+9.23	1.75
UK Growth ‡	283.20	...	+8.27	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1014.20	...	+16.96	4.58
LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD				
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956				
Euro Ind Acc ‡	807.10	...	+14.40	200.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡	492.10	...	+8.90	200.00
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	149.60	...	+0.50	460.00
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	61.84	...	+0.23	460.00
Global Health ‡	120.90	...	-1.30	1.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡	227.20	...	-1.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	153.20	...	...	580.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	110.20	...	+1.10	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	411.70	...	+2.70	150.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	540.60	...	+12.50	250.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	234.10	...	+5.40	250.00
US Ind Acc ‡@	1383.00	...	+1.00	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	465.40	...	+2.20	90.00
M&G SECURITIES				
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Charifund Inc ‡	1930.60	...	+30.63	5.00
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2				
Extra Income Inc ‡	837.82	...	+14.11	5.06
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	66.79	...	+0.17	4.40
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.21	...	+0.07	6.25
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	100.79	...	+0.03	1.57
Index Trckr Inc ‡	105.57	...	+2.97	2.99
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.29	...	+0.04	4.26
UK Select A Inc ‡	3265.46	...	+66.54	2.68
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3				
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.65	...	+0.08	5.05
Dividend Inc ‡	67.00	...	+0.83	5.33
Recovery A Inc ‡	141.11	...	+1.84	2.88
Sml Cos Inc ‡	358.27	...	+3.84	2.86
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4				
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	162.00	...	+0.92	3.94
MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST				
0808 005 5555				
High Income ‡	87.84	...	+0.13	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	295.30	...	+0.40	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	722.30	...	+17.60	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	325.00	...	+8.00	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	482.10	...	+7.50	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1102.90	...	+17.20	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1304.00	...	-20.00	0.80
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	725.90	...	-10.80	0.80
MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT				
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962				
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)				
Class A Shares				
Equity				
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40	...	...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65	...	...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69	...	...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53	...	...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.88	...	...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.28	...	...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12	...	...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45	...	...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1095.92	...	+48.49	4.36
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1726.55	...	+76.29	4.32
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1158.68	...	+51.19	4.44
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14017.83	...	+621.60	0.33
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1616.08	...	+81.08	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1722.61	...	+86.42	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3770.34	...	+167.19	0.33
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1514.02	...	+66.58	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1482.05	...	+58.76	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1523.13	...	+60.35	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1508.20	...	+66.29	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1539.14	...	+61.03	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	143.93	...	+0.46	4.77
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.01	...	+0.31	4.79
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1374.55	...	+4.34	4.73
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3045.00	...	+9.60	4.62
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2387.03	...	+26.04	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1428.51	...	+27.57	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2513.53	...	+27.29	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1479.14	...	+28.50	...
SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS				
08457 413002				
Equity Inc Inc ‡	243.30	...	+6.30	...
Stkmkt 100 Thr ‡	230.80	...	...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	654.20	...	+17.60	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	314.10	...	+8.40	...
SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD				
0141 248 6100				
Far Eastern Inc	617.07	649.47	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1359.21	1434.52	+17.14	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.49	1508.70	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.23	593.38	...	7.81
SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS				
0845 300 2244				
Overseas Growth Investment Funds				
Tracker & Special Investment Funds				
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	604.80	...	+14.40	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	275.30	...	+6.60	2.50
UK & Income Investment Funds				
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	327.90	...	+1.90	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	107.90	...	+0.60	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	472.80	...	+11.80	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	296.50	...	+0.60	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.22	...	+0.13	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	561.00	...	+11.90	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	151.80	...	+3.20	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	227.90	...	+0.60	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.21	...	+0.25	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	135.90	...	+3.20	2.50
OEIC B Class				
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	670.10	...	+16.00	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	273.70	...	+6.50	2.60
OEIC C Class				
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	132.70	...	+3.10	2.60
STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS				
0845 279 3003				
Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares				
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.26	...	+0.37	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.00	...	+0.19	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.30	...	+0.40	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	287.00	...	-1.30	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	199.10	...	+0.60	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	262.40	...	+0.80	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	185.10	...	...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	47.91	...	...	...
Managed Acc ‡	532.20	...	-9.90	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	295.10	...	+7.00	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	799.60	...	-0.20	...
SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS				
Enquiries:0141 222 1151				
Balanced A Acc ‡	182.67	...	+0.12	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	154.61	...	+0.10	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	131.80	...	-0.11	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	104.26	...	-0.09	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	485.44	...	+0.55	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	424.73	...	+0.49	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	480.32	...	+0.58	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	314.07	...	+0.22	2.17
THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Client Serv: 0800 0684000				
Retail Shares Class 1				
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.36	...	-0.03	4.65
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	101.44	...	+1.91	2.75
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.58	...	+0.13	4.31
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.48	...	+0.12	3.98
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.47	...	+0.21	4.18
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.80	...	+0.12	3.83
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	119.27	...	+2.29	3.52
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	112.25	...	+2.24	3.22
Threadneedle UK Instl Rtl ‡	249.41	...	+5.59	1.34
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	89.74	...	+2.11	3.01
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	166.00	...	+4.31	1.34
Threadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	398.57	...	+3.67	0.39
For Resolution see Ignis				
TU FUND MANAGERS LTD				
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	997.80	997.80	+29.90	1.23

This list contains unit trusts and Oeics widely held by private investors. The weekly price change is based on a Friday-to-Thursday trading period.* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡ Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

Expert business analysis straight to your inbox

For the latest financial and economic news from our business editors, subscribers can sign up to the business newsletter by going to 'My newsletters'.



To try a digital subscription, visit thetimes.com/subscribe

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Best buys

Data supplied by defaqto Smarter financial decisions

Savings

Easy access (without introductory bonus)

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
cahoot	via website	Simple Saver	£1	4.32%
thisbank	via website	Triple Access Savings L	£1,000	4.28%
Oxbury	via website	Easy Access Summer Account	£1,000	4.22%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	Easy Access	£1	4.21%
Kent Reliance	via website	Limited Access Saver	£1	4.21%

Long-term fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Atom Bank	via app	5 Year Fixed Saver	£50	5.00%
GB Bank	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£1,000	4.98%
Close Brothers	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	4.97%
Afin Bank	via app	5 Year Fixed Term Account	£1,000	4.96%
Oxbury	via website	5 Year Bond Account	£1,000	4.88%

Easy access cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Hargreaves Lansdown	via website	Shawbrook Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.52%
Atom Bank	via app	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.25%
Kent Reliance	via branch	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1,000	4.24%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.23%
Cynergy Bank	via website	Online Isa	£1	4.15%

Fixed cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Tandem	via app	1 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1	4.67%
Skipton BS	via website	18 Mnth Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£500	4.51%
RCI Bank	via website	2 Year Fixed Term Cash Isa	£1,000	4.80%
Tandem	via app	3 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1	4.78%
Tandem	via app	5 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1	4.81%

Lifetime cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Moneybox	via app	Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	4.80%
Plum	via app	Lifetime Isa	£1	4.75%
Tembo	via app	Barclays - Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	4.00%
Paragon	via website	Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	3.51%
Bath BS	via website/app	Lifetime Isa	£1	2.60%

Regular savings accounts

Provider	Contact	Account	Min Mntly	AER
Santander	via website/ app	Regular Saver CV	£1	8.00%
Bank of Scotland	via website	Monthly Saver F	£25	8.00%
Lloyds Bank	via website/app	Club Lloyds Monthly Saver CF	£25	8.00%
Lloyds Bank	via website/app	Monthly Saver CF	£25	8.00%
Zopa Bank	via app	Smart Saver Regular Saver CV	£1	7.10%

Pension annuities

Single life

Provider	Contact	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Life	0808 164 0164	£6,814.42	£7,438.22	£8,094.02
Canada Life	0345 606 0708	£6,879.28	£7,491.38	£8,049.99
Legal & General	0808 304 9447	£6,687.12	£7,370.04	£8,065.56
Scottish Widows	0345 757 3494	£6,775.74	£7,538.97	£8,270.47
Aviva	0800 051 4094	£6,849.55	£7,369.60	£8,106.68

Joint life

Provider	Contact	Couple: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Life	0808 164 0164	£6,526.13	£7,055.76	£7,603.76
Canada Life	0345 606 0708	£6,637.10	£7,138.86	£7,743.37
Legal & General	0808 304 9447	£6,446.88	£6,789.12	£7,485.36
Scottish Widows	0345 757 3494	£6,548.59	£7,117.53	£7,803.67
Aviva	0800 051 4094	£6,684.06	£6,781.62	£7,368.89

Based on a £100k pension pot. **Data supplied by Kellands, a chartered financial planner**

Mortgages

First-time buyer mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redmptn charge until
Beverley	01482 881510	4.64% D	for 2 years	95%	£995	1st 2 yrs
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.99% V	for 2 years	95%	£0	None
West Bromwich BS	0800 298 0008	5.20% F	to 31.10.29	95%	£499	To 31.10.29
Earl Shilton	01455 844 422	5.19% D	for 5 years	95%	£125	1st 5 yrs
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	5.25% F	for 5 years	95%	£0	1st 5 yrs

2-year fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.32%	for 2 years	60%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.49%	for 2 years	75%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.57%	for 2 years	80%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.57%	for 2 years	85%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.81%	for 2 years	90%	£490	P

5-year fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.38%	for 5 years	60%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.48%	for 5 years	75%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.58%	for 5 years	80%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.58%	for 5 years	85%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.73%	for 5 years	90%	£490	P

Long-term fixed-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
Santander	0800 555 100	5.01%	to 02.11.36	60%	£999	R
Santander	0800 555 100	5.06%	to 02.11.36	75%	£999	R
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	5.49%	for 10 years	80%	£999	P
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	5.49%	for 10 years	85%	£999	P
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	5.74%	for 10 years	90%	£999	P

Discounted variable-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.05% V	for 2 years	60%	£999	P
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.17% V	for 2 years	75%	£999	P&R
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.17% V	for 2 years	80%	£999	P
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.29% V	for 2 years	85%	£999	P&R
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.65% V	for term	90%	£490	P&R

Buy-to-let mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.34% V	to 30.09.28	75%	£1,495	P&R
Barclays	0333 202 7580	4.52% V	for 2 years	75%	£899	P
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.29% F	to 30.09.31	75%	3%	P&R
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.48% F	to 31.10.31	75%	£3,999	P
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.89% F	to 30.09.31	75%	£0	P&R

The selections above are based on a combination of initial rate, fee and incentive available.

National Savings & investments

	Notice or Term	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Accounts and bonds				
Guaranteed Growth Bond	1 Yr Bnd	£500	4.69% F	Maturity
Direct Saver	None	£1	3.45%	Yearly
Income Bond	None	£500	3.45%	Monthly
Tax-free products				
Junior Isa	Age 18	£1	3.70%	Yearly
Direct Isa	None	£1	3.80%	Yearly

Personal loans

Fixed monthly repayment on £10,000 for 5 years

Provider	Contact	Rep APR	Amount per month	Total repaid
M&S Bank	via website	5.9%	£192.15	£11,529.00
TSB	via website	6.1%	£193.03	£11,581.80
AA	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00
Santander	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00
Tesco Bank	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00

Borrowing rates and availability of products are subject to individual credit ratings.

Credit cards

Introductory rate for balance transfers

Provider	Contact	Product name	Bal trans Transfer	Bal trans fee	Purch APR
TSB	0345 8353846	Platinum BT	0% 1st 38 mths	3.49%	24.95%
HSBC	03455 873 444	Balance Transfer	0% 1st 36 mths	3.09%	24.90%
NatWest	03457 888 444	Longer BT	0% 1st 36 mths	3.10%	24.90%
Virgin Money	0800 011 3210	Balance Transfer	0% 1st 36 mths	3.10%	24.90%
Barclaycard	0800 151 0900	Platinum BT	0% 1st 36 mths	3.15%	24.90%

Introductory rate for purchases

Provider	Contact	Product name	Introductory Term	Purch APR
TSB	0345 835 3846	Platinum Purchase	0% 1st 26 mths	24.95%
M&S Bank	0800 997 996	Purchase Plus	0% 1st 25 mths	24.90%
Lloyds Bank	0345 603 7239	0% Purchase and BT	0% 1st 25 mths	24.94%
Barclaycard	0800 151 0900	Platinum BT	0% 1st 24 mths	24.90%
HSBC	03455 873 444	Purchase Plus	0% 1st 24 mths	24.90%

Cashback credit card

Provider	Contact	Product name	Purchase APR	Cashback
American Express	0800 917 8047	Cashback Everyday	29.1% Intro	0.50% - 1.00% standard 5%/5mth (max £125)
Santander	0800 085 1759	Rewards Credit Card	24.90%	0.25% Standard 3%/12 months P
Lloyds Bank	0345 603 7239	Ultra Credit Card	14.94% Intro	0.25% Standard 1%/12 months
Virgin Money	0800 011 3210	Everyday Cashback	24.90% Intro	0.25% Standard 1%/3mth (max £15 a mth)
Natwest	03457 888 444	Travel Reward	27.90%	0.1% - 1.00% standard T on spend over £1 a year

Borrowing rates are subject to credit ratings. Terms apply to cashback. T = Eligible travel spend for higher cashback; P = Eligible travel and eating out spend only for higher cashback

Current accounts

Credit interest

Provider	Contact	Account name	Account Fee	AER
Nationwide BS	0800 30 20 10	FlexDirect	None	5.00% AE
Bank of Scotland	0345 721 3141	Vantage Classic Account	None	3.00% B
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds	None E	3.00% B
Bank of Scotland	0345 721 3141	Vantage Silver Account	£11.50pm	3.00% B
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds Silver	£11.50pm	3.00% B

Arranged overdrafts

Provider	Contact	Account name	Account Fee	EAR	Usage Fee
Starling	0207 930 4450	Current Account	None	15.0%	£0
First Direct	0345 600 2424	1st Account	None	39.9%	£250
Virgin Money	0800 678 3654	M Plus Account	None	19.9%	£0
Virgin Money	0800 678 3654	Club M Account	£14 pm	19.9%	£0
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds	None E	29.9%	£100

Current account interest rates paid up to a specified level, terms may apply to qualify for rates shown. A = Introductory rate. B = Certain balance needed for high interest. C = Existing customer. D = Discounted variable rate. E = Terms apply. F = Fixed rate. L = Limited Access. V = Variable rate. All savings rates are AER variable unless stated. Methods of opening and operating accounts vary. All rates and terms subject to change. No liability accepted for any loss arising from use of this information. Readers who are not financial professionals should seek expert advice. Rates correct at 11am July, 30 2026

Listen for free now

DAB RADIO FREE APP 'PLAY TIMES RADIO'

TIMESRadio

Money Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
86¾	34⅞	Aston Martin Lag	35	–	1	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	240⅝	+	1⅜	6.1	11.1
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝			...	-3.4
3816	2624	**Admiral**	3772	–	8	5.4	15.3
662½	414½	AJ Bell	587½	–	11½	2.5	22.9
28761½	22372½	AON Corp	26947¾	–	19¼	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	840			6.5	7.7
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	206⅜	–	⅜	8.2	17.0
2126½	1479¼	Australia & NZ	1947¼	–	9½	5.8	19.2
700⅝	590⅝	**Aviva**	693⅜	–	2⅜	5.7	25.8
1080	613	Banco Santander	1050	–	4	1.6	13.5
554¼	352½	**Barclays**	508¾	–	2¼	2.3	11.6
17½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4½			...	-2.3
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦‡	676			5.4	5.1
363⅞	212	Bridgepoint Grp	320½	+	4¾	3.0	64.1
350	261	Chesnara	344	–	½	6.5	-68.1
489	346	City of London Grp	476	–	12	6.9	16.0
563½	318½	Close Bros	425⅞	+	3¾	...	-6.4
753	203	CMC Markets‡	667	–	33	2.1	24.3
2957¼	2057	Deutsche Bank	2720	–	21⅞	3.1	10.1
93	74½	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74¼	–	⅛	0.9	...
240½	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211			...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½			1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83			4.3	15.5
4572½	2095	Georgia Capital	3955	–	55	...	2.5
57	43¼	Hansard Global	51	–	2	8.7	39.2
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223			4.5	7.7
1904	1246	**Hiscox**	1809	–	7	2.1	13.5
1604½	908½	**HSBC**	1576	–	11	3.5	17.5
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1460	–	246	2.9	10.1
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	109¾	–	1⅜	9.1	6.9
2340	1424⅛	**ICG**‡	1888	–	11	4.6	11.3
257½	195	Intl Personal Fin	249½	–	½	...	10.1
143½	115½	Intl Public P'ship	142	–	⅜	6.2	-11.8
690	499⅛	**Investec**	649	+	3	5.9	8.4
76	60	Investment Co	75			...	...
72	48	IP Group	62¼	+	⅛	2.0	8.6
27	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8			43.8	2.5
214½	113⅛	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	158	–	2¼	3.8	8.2
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs	602½	–	7	2.8	6.7
310	217¼	**Legal & General**	300½	+	⅜	7.3	30.1
12040	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	11610	+	20	3.2	8.1
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt‡	284			6.7	18.4
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	36½			8.6	16.5
117¾	74⅛	**Lloyds Banking**	114¾	–	1	3.5	16.4
22	14	LMS Capital	15½			25.7	...

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2864	+ 17	3.0	5.3
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	380	– 5½	3.5	11.9
1758	1408½	Aberforth Smlr	1704	+ 8	2.8	26.6
1356	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1345	+ 15	2.2	72.7
395	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	382	– 6½	4.0	30.9
220	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	253½	– 1½	1.8	50.0
194	154½	AVI Japan	164	– 5	1.3	55.8
331	260	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	306	– 2	0.8	...
118	91⅛	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	117	+ 1½	0.6	...
1044	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1036	+ 4	1.0	...
168⅜	123	Baillie Gifford SN	161⅜	+ 2¼	0.4	...
225	180½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	220		2.8	35.3
153½	120½	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	147	+ 1	1.9	65.3
445	385	BH Macro GBP	417	+ 1	...	19.7
1684	804	Biotech Growth	1602	– 28	...	-383.2
284	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	279	– ½	5.0	98.6
205	116½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	174		3.3	49.7
208	159½	BlckRck Fro Inv	187	– 3½	4.1	24.8
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	588	– 1	1.2	85.3
238	198	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	227	– 1	3.4	31.4
288⅜	230½	BlckRck Smlr♦	269	+ ½	2.9	30.7
1072¼	543½	BlckRck Wld Min	883	+ 1	2.7	36.7
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1592½	+ 2½	...	-265.9
1562	1336	Brunner‡	1538	– 2	1.8	55.2
395	312	Caledonia Inv‡	388	+ 3½	2.0	50.4
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	593	+ 1	3.7	27.5
155⅞	87	Crystal Amber Fd	89½		-64.9	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord‡	500		5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	358	– 4	3.7	29.5
120	92	CT UK HIT B‡	112½		5.3	23.2
126	97	CT UK HIT‡	116	– 1½	5.1	23.9
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent♦	475		...	...
860	737½	Edinburgh IT	844	– 2	3.8	31.7
294½	185½	Edin Wwide	232½	– ½	...	-109.5
957	782	European Opps‡♦	937		-70.1	...
1332	325¼	**F&C Inv Trust**‡	331¼	+ 1¼	1.3	73.7
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	588	– 6	3.5	26.1
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	268	+ 3	3.4	29.1
1574	810	FdityEmrgMkt	1370	+ 24	1.4	59.5
442	367½	Fidelity European Trust‡	428½	– ½	2.3	37.9
469½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	463½	– 1½	2.2	37.7
924	706½	Fins Gwth & Inc	804	– 6	2.5	42.5
841⅛	693⅛	GCP Infrastructure	833½		8.4	38.8
370	312	Global Opps Tst	322	– 1	3.2	41.3
87	84⅞	Golden Prospect‡	85¼		-12.8	...
681½	571½	Greencoat Renew	663⅞	– ⅛	-16.5	...
1201½	921½	Greencoat UK Wind	1113⅞	+ 3¼	9.6	-12.8
344	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	336	+ 8	1.3	76.4
330	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	313	– 2	1.4	71.1
3470	2630⅛	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3335		...	-56.1
212½	173½	Hend High Inc	205	– 1	5.4	18.2
966	769	Hend Smlr	953		3.0	36.5
3290⅛	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2950		...	...
524⅞	318½	HgCapital Trust	390	+ 1½	1.3	...
138	107½	HICL Infra	136		6.2	9.9
1611½	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1440	+ 18	2.9	-106.6
494⅛	379	Impax Env Mkts	432	+ 1½	1.2	87.4
519	366	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	483	+ 6½	4.0	49.1
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc‡	170		7.2	13.0
423	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc‡	412	– 5	3.9	82.2
1238	1041	JPM American	1200	+ 16	1.0	...
652	388½	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	558	+ 8	5.6	...
313	246½	JPM China‡	268½	+ 1	5.1	69.0
980	782½	JPM Claverhs‡	974	+ 4	3.7	28.9
310	181½	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	250½		0.2	...
181¼	118½	JPM Em Mkts‡	161¾	+ 4⅝	4.7	70.3
666	548	JPMorgan Euro ‡	625	+ 3	2.6	34.4
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc‡	199½	+ 4	3.0	35.1
616½	529⅛	JPM GG&I	609	+ 5	4.1	73.6
1106	799	JPM India‡	882	– 11	5.0	...
849	633	JPM Japan	789		1.1	77.7
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	432	+ 7	0.7	...
1270	977½	Law Debenture	1242	– 8	3.0	33.3
186½	141½	Lowland Inv‡	182½	– 1½	3.7	27.1
139¼	138	Marwyn Val Inv	139		15.3	...
282	234½	Mercantile IT‡	276½	– 2½	3.0	29.9
673	536	Merchants Trust‡	666	– 1	4.5	21.8
804	682	Mid Wynd	770	– 4	1.1	...
1664	1322	Monks Inv Trust	1578	+ 12	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	174	– ½	0.9	89.7
1034	854½	Murray Income Trust	1020		4.0	26.4
371	283½	Murray Intl‡	368½	+ 1½	3.4	26.5
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	412	+ 8	1.4	73.6
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	395	+ 1½	...	-56.3
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3808	+ 88	1.4	3.6
555	507	Personal Assets‡	545	+ 1	1.0	90.4
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	626½	+ 15	...	-745.8
861½	63¼	Renewables Infra	76½	– 1	9.9	-14.1
2610	1906⅛	RIT Cap Ptnr	2565		1.8	...
990½	490	Riverstone	589		...	-36.3
738	488¼	Schroder TotRt	690	+ 23	1.7	70.3
892	585	Schrd Asia Pac	791	+ 11	1.6	59.9
376	310	Schrod Inc Gwth‡	370	– 4	4.0	29.5
401	258	Schrod Jap Gwth‡	373	+ 1	3.2	54.0
772	652	Schrod UKMid‡	750	– 9	3.0	30.0
17½	12¼	Schroder UK PP Tr	17		...	-70.8
561	480½	Scot American	555	– 3	2.9	35.5
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1330½	+ 15½	0.3	...
87	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	86⅜	+ ¼	8.0	12.7
253	215½	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	229	– 3	3.7	35.3
352	196½	Temp Emg Mkt‡	305	+ 7½	1.7	56.6
428	329	Temple Bar	419½	– 2½	3.7	30.4
198½	162½	The Glbl Smaller	193½	+ 1¾	1.6	65.0
9	0½	Potentially AI	6¾		-1.7	...
364½	291	TR Property	318	+ ½	5.1	20.1
188	188	UIL	196		19.3	...
302	239¾	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	287	+ 2	3.3	21.1
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	703	– 4	...	4.5
398	306½	Ww Health	376	– 1	0.6	...

Listen for free now
DAB RADIO
FREE APP
'PLAY TIMES RADIO'
TIMESRadio

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
6347¼	4186	Sun Life Canada	6196	+ 31⅞	3.3	...
6¾	2½	Tavistock Invs♦	3½		3.2	2.6
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4812	+ 12	5.4	6.7
1¾	0⅛	Tern♦	1¾	– ⅛	...	-1.6
60	40⅜	Time Finance♦	50¼	– ¼	...	7.9
0⅛	0⅛	Tooru♦	0⅛		...	-1.6
4	1½	Truetide♦	3		...	-5.4
132	77⅜	Vanquis Banking Gp	77¾	– 7¾	...	24.3
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2100		...	11.1
7239¼	5453½	Wells Fargo	6424¾	+ 62¾	2.3	...
2275¾	1609⅜	Westpac Bkg Corp	1976½	– 13¾	4.1	18.9
31¼	23	Worsley Investors	28½		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	56557¼	– 132	4.9	19.3

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
380	181	Alumasc♦	227½	– 7½	4.9	8.8
6⅛	4½	Aseana Properties	4⅞		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1½		...	-150.0
900	539	Balfour Beatty	862½	– 11½	1.6	16.4
410¼	235⅛	**Barratt Redrow**	293¼	– 1¾	5.8	21.6
2890	1715	Bellway	1988	– 28	3.6	15.0
4442	2796	Berkeley	3500	– 28	...	10.6
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	887½	+ 1	5.3	...
7006⅜	6854⅛	Kingspan Group	6681½		0.7	21.1
722	522½	**Land Securities**	705½	– 15½	5.8	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	196¾	– 1¾	6.3	...
25⅛	4¼	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6¼	+ ⅛	...	-0.4
212½	124	Marshalls	161¾	+ 1½	4.1	28.4
113	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	77	– 1½	6.0	19.2
1⅛	0⅛	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4430	– 30	3.7	11.9
10200	8405	Mountview Estates‡	8500	– 250	6.2	16.3
84	65¼	NewRiver REIT‡	81½	– 1¼	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	180	+ 5	8.3	40.0
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1107	– 4	5.4	12.4
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props‡	94½	– 2	7.7	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦‡	30¾	– ½	4.9	-61.4
849½	578¾	Safestore‡	615½		5.0	...
1126	791½	Savills	920	– 18	3.7	17.7
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**	965	– 1⅜	3.3	...
162⅞	124½	Shaftesbury Capital	143¾	– 2½	3.0	7.7
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	412½		2.7	39.7
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	152		5.2	8.6
383¾	271⅛	Breedon	331	+ 3¾	4.6	13.7
446⅛	318⅛	**British Land**	442	– 1¾	5.2	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2136	1469⅛	Derwent London	2104	– 12	3.9	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4⅝		...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	12	+ ½	2.1	6.6
75	29	Fletcher King♦	37½		6.0	25.3
62	31⅞	Foxtons Group	39¼	– ½	3.0	9.1
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	590	– 10	3.4	17.5
401⅝	241	Genuit Group	271¼	– 3¼	4.8	14.9
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	272	– 5	4.0	10.0
1009¼	788½	Grafton Grp Units	965¾	– 4	3.9	13.7
213	149½	Grainger	174½	– 1¼	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	349	– 4½	2.3	0.0
383	263⅞	Hammerson	382	+ 13¼	4.8	...
191	116¼	Harworth Group	130⅝		1.4	45.0
400	225	Heath (Samuel)♦	255		5.1	31.9
244⅛	180⅛	Helical‡	199	– 1	1.3	41.2
159¼	87⅛	Ibstock	93¼	– ⅞	3.2	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	120	– 1	7.4	12.4
3518	1238	Keller	3024	– 36	2.3	14.9
15⅛	6½	SIG	8¾	+ ¼	...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	123¼	– ½	...	16.9
113	86⅛	Sirius Real Estate	99	– ¾	5.5	7.6
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23⅛	15¼	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.6
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	78	– 5	5.3	27.9
140	104	Town Centre	130½	– ½	3.8	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	291¾	– 3¼	...	6.9
434⅛	312	Workspace Group‡	350¾	+ 3¾	7.4	...
920	730	Wynnstay Props♦‡	865		3.3	12.0

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
229	88⅛	AEP Plantations	180	+ 9	3.4	10.5
30	17⅛	Airea♦	27½		3.6	10.8
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2087	– 4	3.0	14.7
715⅝	590	Barr (AG)	650	– 6	2.9	15.4
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4570	+ 4	5.4	13.0
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1187½	– 6½	...	...
181¼	85⅞	C&C Group	101¾	– 2	4.8	...
5⅛	2¼	Capital Metals♦	4½		...	-37.4
460	271	Churchill China♦	385	– 5	5.5	9.7
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	5010	– 50	2.0	22.6
1515⅛	804½	Colefax♦	1480	+ 35	0.4	10.5
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5350	– 80	2.1	18.1
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1634½	– 9	3.8	20.8
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1626	+ 16	3.7	10.1
158	114½	Fevara	128½	– 3½	1.9	5.6
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**‡	19120	– 300	3.0	30.6
2185⅛	1028⅛	Glanbia	1975	– 38½	1.9	36.3
307½	191½	Greencore	260⅜	+ ⅝	1.0	19.7
84	4¾	Headlam	7	+ 1⅜	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	599	+ 31	5.8	6.8
3632	2626	**Imperial Brands**	2825	– 17	5.9	11.3
7646⅜	5567¼	Kerry Group	7044⅞	– 340	1.8	20.6
170	106¼	McBride	163	+ ¾	1.8	8.4
165	85	Mulberry Group♦	157½	+ 2½	...	-12.1
1425	880	Nichols♦	1060	+ 20	3.7	18.1
374	252	Norcros‡	316	– 1	3.6	...
372	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.0	8.6
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0½		...	-0.0
138	47⅜	Portmeirion♦	50	+ 2	...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅛		...	-57.2
113⅜	65½	PZ Cussons	110¾	– 1	3.2	-80.3
138	87	REA	109½	+ ½	...	-211.5
217⅛	155	Tandem♦	180	+ 5	1.7	11.6
330	220	The Character Grp♦‡	307	+ 3	2.3	-45.5
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6		...	-14.0
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**	4743	– 107	3.4	12.8
111	19½	Victoria♦	65	– 1⅛	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
27	12½	Checkit♦	18½	– ½	...	-7.1
620	446½	Chemring Group	590½	+ 4	1.4	33.2
55	28½	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34		...	-37.8
1538	881½	Cohort♦	1226	– 8	1.5	23.5
510	171	Dialight	473	– 5	...	...
15	5½	Feedback♦	6		...	-0.2
1270	463½	Gooch & Housego♦	1220		1.1	89.1
28500	8306½	Goodwin	17320	+ 360	1.6	52.9
4902	3191½	**Halma**‡	3530	– 44	0.7	35.8
3145	1951½	Hill & Smith	2850	– 30	1.9	27.8
2½	1	Image Scan♦	2½		...	-10.0
3076	2138	**IMI**	2936	– 10	1.2	23.6
7000	3480	Judges Scl.♦	4570	– 60	2.5	55.3
90	34	LPA♦	81	– 1½	...	-30.7
685	409⅞	**Melrose**	454¼	– 20⅞	1.7	15.7
251½	167	Morgan Advanced	226		5.4	30.1
405	200	Mpac♦	325		...	-10.2
1800	1100	MS Intl♦	1440		1.8	21.4
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2732	– 16	0.9	32.3
2413⅛	1779½	Phillips Elec	1945½	– 34	3.7	-45.5
4½	1	PipeHawk♦	2¼		...	-3.2
5490	2860	Renishaw	4948	+ 98	1.6	43.0
1532½	990	**Rolls-Royce**	1467¾	+ 4¾	0.7	21.1
489¼	286½	Rotork	486¼		1.7	35.2
105	60	SDI Group♦	91		...	19.4
318½	161	Senior	290½		1.0	-284.8
2036⅞	1977½	SKF Group	2005¾		3.0	29.9
2746¼	2088	**Smiths**	2642		1.8	30.8
215	135	Solid State♦	191½	+ 5	1.4	26.6
245	170	Somero Enter♦	230	+ 5	3.3	16.3
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	6945	– 45	2.4	31.3
7½	4½	Tanfield♦	4⅝		...	-4.5
350	240	Thorpe FW♦	253	– 6	2.8	11.7
142¼	47	Transense Tech♦	48½		...	5.2
507½	346½	Vesuvius	371	+ 6¼	6.4	17.6
710	325	Vp♦ex	511	– 3	0.9	19.5
3580	2254	**Weir**	2636	– 68	1.6	27.5
2060	814½	XP Power	1616	– 6	...	-38.5

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	280		1.0	60.6
12⅜	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	6	+ ½	...	-7.1
8	0⅞	CellBxHealth♦	1¾		...	-0.2
580	370	Anpario♦	530		2.4	13.2
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**	12632	– 88	1.9	25.8
3¾	1⅜	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1¾		...	2.5
259¼	193	**Convatec**	224	– 4¼	2.4	35.1
38	20	Potter & Moore♦	22½		2.4	7.4
116⅜	72	Eco Animal Health♦	100	+ 3	...	30.7
32	21⅛	EKF Diagnostics♦	25¾	– ⅛	...	54.7
13½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅝		...	-0.2
3228¼	1943	Genus	2194	– 50	1.5	74.9
2282	1288½	**GSK**	1931½	– 8½	3.6	13.7
0¼	0¼	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.0
416½	274½	**Haleon**	363¼	– 5¼	2.0	19.5
2004	1187	Hikma Pharma	1585	– 9	3.9	11.7
274½	150½	Hutchmed China♦	170	+ 2½	...	4.3
19⅜	1⅜	ImmuPharma♦	3¼	– ⅛	...	-9.7
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½	+ ⅛	...	-15.9
15	6½	IXICO♦	8	– ⅛	...	-4.3

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1	0⅛	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅛		...	-4.0
77⅛	53⅛	NIOX Group♦	60⅛	+ ¼	2.6	35.7
131.50	91.56	Novartis	CHF126.60	- 0.18	2.9	41.8
962	418	Oxford Biomedica	560	- 5	...	-20.8
0¼	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.8
4⅛	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1¾		...	-1.7
6522½	3664	**Reckitt Benck**	5240	- 60	4.1	11.2
27	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	24	- 1	...	-10.0
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	23	+ 2	...	-9.6
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1158½	- 29½	2.5	21.6
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	233½	- 1	0.6	57.0
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6¼		...	1.8
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	71¼	- 3⅛	...	31.2
4780½	3665½	BASF	4324⅜	- 45¼	4.4	27.8
4606¼	2164⅜	Bayer	4123½	- 16⅛	0.2	-13.1
98¼	71	Coats Group	80¼	- ¾	3.1	18.3
3338	2426¾	**Croda**	3205	- 66	3.5	72.2
414½	230	Cropper (James)♦	380	+ 23	...	12.3
184	136	Elementis	177¼	- ⅜	1.9	-30.6
110	6⅛	Hardide♦	103½	+ 2½	...	...
4065	2095	International Paper	3055	- 150	4.5	-7.9
2434	1730¾	Johnson Matthey‡	1992	- 8	3.9	-34.8
1129½	660	Mondi	892¼	+ 16⅛	1.4	27.9
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	125		4.8	9.2
949½	597	Swire Pacific	942½	+ 2	3.8	45.9
13	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8¼		...	-7.6
124	16¾	Synthomer	88	- 3¼	...	-0.9
2858¼	2026½	Takeda Pharma	2572½	- 100	3.7	-57.0
819	515	Victrex	783	+ 3	7.6	24.5
430	320	Wynnstay♦	365		4.9	36.9
479¼	265	Zotefoams	460½	- 1	1.7	9.9

Leisure

458	231	Accesso Tech♦	319½	+ 4½	...	15.4
260	160	Celtic♦	213		...	6.0
249¼	164	Domino's Pizza	201⅜	- 3⅜	5.6	13.3
1031	500⅜	**Entain**	541⅜	- 8¼	3.6	-5.2
73	19¾	Evoke	44½	- ½	...	-0.4
23610	6722	Flutter Ent	7588		...	-48.6
55	29	Gaming Realms♦	30¼		...	15.2
294¾	210	Heavitree♦‡	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦‡	225		2.9	4.2
175.70	113.84	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$160.70	- 0.25	1.1	32.7
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	276	- 4	...	9.3
297	129⅞	On The Beach	187½	+ ⅛	2.1	34.1
164⅝	86	Rank Group	96¼	- 3⅛	3.0	10.2
212⅜	137¼	SSP	199¼	- 1½	2.2	-21.4
0⅞	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
786½	530½	Wetherspoon JD	778	+ 5	1.5	13.0
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2510	- 17	3.9	20.4

Media

76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	62		4.3	49.3
29	18	Altitude Group♦	26		...	20.3
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	79		5.1	11.2
844⅛	418⅝	**Autotrader**	523¼	- 3	2.2	15.3
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	611	- 12	2.7	18.4
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1⅝		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
23½	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262¼	Future	305¾	- 3¾	5.6	4.9
154	60⅛	GlobalData	79¼	- ⅜	1.9	18.0
106	44	IG Design Group♦	106	+ 4½	0.9	-0.9
1000	719	**Informa**	885¾	- 28	2.5	...
87⅜	65¼	ITV	74¼	- 1	6.7	12.6
228	98½	ME Group	110¾	- ¾	7.6	7.4
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	14.2
27	12	Mission Group♦	18	- 1	...	-0.8
220¼	139⅛	Mony Group‡	196½	- 5¼	6.4	12.8
2341⅞	1624⅛	News Corp A	2058⅜	- 18½	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2326⅜	- 144⅜	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦‡	293½	- 1½	5.2	-9.8
1337	874⅛	**Pearson**	1257	- 35½	2.0	24.5
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
75⅜	40⅛	Reach‡	44½	- 1½	13.2	-1.1
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
3976	1991	**Relx**	2607	- 68	2.6	23.2
827	391⅜	Rightmove	464⅜	+ 7¾	2.3	16.5
270	131	SpaceandPeople♦	137½		...	6.4
134½	95⅛	STV Group	104		...	-9.6
470	170½	System1 Group♦	325		1.8	31.2
4348¼	4348¼	21st Cent Fox A	4348¼		1.0	...
3351¾	3300½	21st Cent Fox B	3351¾		1.2	...
369	230	Wilmington	286	- 1	4.1	22.2
412⅜	218½	WPP	298¾	- 1	5.0	5.9
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5

Natural Resources

0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10½	+ ⅛	...	-4.4
89¾	36¼	Afentra♦	62½	+ ⅞	...	-60.1
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.2
0¼	0⅛	Allen Metals♦	0⅛		...	-12.4
2⅞	1	Aminex	1¼		...	-13.7
8924	3342½	Anglo Amer Plat	5566	+ 171½	8.1	21.1
4239	2042	**Anglo Amer**	3733	+ 7	0.8	-15.2
435	154½	Anglo Asian Mng♦	380	- 10	0.8	33.0
4475	1850½	**Antofagasta**	3655	- 49	1.3	36.5
1¼	0⅛	Arc Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-1.3
2¾	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1⅜	- ⅛	...	-14.0
0⅞	0⅛	Arkle Resources♦	0⅛		...	-10.2
2¼	0⅛	Asiamet Resources♦	1½		...	-12.4
1094	440½	Atalaya Mine	885½		1.1	17.0
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	7	+ ¼	...	-2.1
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	10.5
3495	1873½	BHP Group	3134	- 24	3.3	23.7
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	11⅛	- ⅜	...	-93.4
122½	10½	Bougainville	11¼		...	-16.6
609⅜	397⅛	**BP**	552½	+ 9¾	4.5	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.8
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	4⅞	- ¼	...	-9.3
5½	2¼	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.2
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1390	- 5	3.0	6.6
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	147⅜	- ¾	8.1	-4.7
2¼	1½	Chariot Ltd♦	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	9½		...	-1.9
300½	99¼	DRD Gold	152⅛	- 2	2.7	13.0
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0¼		...	-3.1
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2238	**Endeavour**	3522	- 33	3.8	16.9
28	9⅛	EnQuest	23⅞	+ ¼	3.4	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2½		...	16.7
2⅜	0½	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1¾	+ ⅛	...	-8.5
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo‡	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1371	**Fresnillo**	2475	- 47	3.8	17.7
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	20½	- ½	...	-5.5
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	3⅝	- ½	...	-5.1
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	3⅜		...	-0.1
3⅜	1⅜	Getech♦	2⅜	- ¼	...	-6.9
707¼	275⅛	**Glencore**	543	+ 4	2.3	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅛		...	-4.5
4582¾	1793⅜	Gold Fields	2414½	- 50¼	4.7	...
21	5⅞	Goldplat♦	17¾		3.0	29.6
2	0⅛	Goldstone Res♦	0⅛		...	-0.9
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	516	- 21	...	15.6
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	295		...	32.8
235	157⅛	Gulf Keystone	170¾	+ ¼	7.4	33.0
858	246½	Hochschild	433⅜	- 7⅞	1.0	14.9
553	288½	Hunting	443½	+ 3½	2.2	22.8
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.1
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	102½	+ 1¾	...	-13.8
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½	+ ⅛	...	-3.4
1⅛	0⅛	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅛		...	-3.9
2½	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1¾		...	-9.7
345	178⅛	Kenmare Res	198	+ ⅜	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.2
4⅞	2⅛	Lexington Gold♦	2⅛		...	-29.5
19¼	10⅛	Metals Exploration♦	12⅝		...	16.1
0⅞	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.0
0⅝	0⅛	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-17.0
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	10	Orosur Mining♦	14¾	- ⅜	...	...
190⅛	52⅜	Pan African Res	92⅛	- 3¼	2.4	17.3
33¼	6½	Pantheon Res♦	12½	+ ⅛	...	-43.0
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	21½		...	3.2
22⅛	5⅛	Petra Diamonds	6⅛	- ⅜	...	-0.2
1¾	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1⅜	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1	- ⅛	...	-4.5
9	2½	Plexus Holdings♦	3¼		...	-1.2
920	672	Porvair‡	850	+ 6	0.8	21.6
5½	2½	Prospex Energy♦	2⅞	- ¼	...	-4.3
5	0⅝	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.8
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	73		...	-912.5
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5370⅞	Rio Tinto Ltd	8902½	+ 116⅞	3.9	16.8
9117	4344½	**Rio Tinto**	7174	+ 38	4.8	15.7
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅝		...	-15.7
375	178	Serabi Gold♦	250	- 7	2.0	4.7
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	235¼	- 2	6.8	-24.3
3758½	2553½	**Shell**	3383½	+ 64½	4.5	15.0
7	2½	Shuka Minerals♦	2⅞		...	-2.1
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1½	- ⅛	...	-1.4
25	5½	Star Energy♦	24½	+ 1½	...	-4.4
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	1½		...	-1.6
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-2.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.4
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-7.0
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6533⅜	+ 59⅜	4.6	12.8
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	15¼	+ ⅜	...	51.4
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2½	URU Metals♦	4	- ¼	...	-2.7
0⅝	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	0½	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.4
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1¼	+ ⅛	...	-5.4
4⅛	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3½		...	-8.1

Professional & Support Services

4570	2980	4imprint	4118	- 82	4.4	13.7
585	464	Andrews Sykes♦	565		4.6	13.1
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	106	- ½	4.3	20.0
2832	1981	**Bunzl**	2802	+ 6	2.6	19.9
416	215	Capita	258½	- 6½	...	-1.8
49⅜	23½	CEPS♦	40½		...	-11.5
165	90	Christie Group♦	156	+ 3½	2.2	30.7
2581½	2000	**Compass**	2356¼	- 22¾	2.2	28.8
87	64½	Croma Security♦	67½		3.6	11.8
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6330		3.4	...
34	15	Diales Grp♦	32		4.7	24.6
7720	4970	**Diploma**	7320	- 10	0.9	53.1
800	505	DiscoverIE‡	775	+ 4	1.7	25.7
114½	78½	Essentra	104¼	- 1¾	2.0	...
4054	2203	**Experian**	2790	- 108	1.9	22.8
330	122½	FIH Group♦	132½	- 2½	5.1	-3.2
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	796		5.0	8.5
5850	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5840	+ 5	2.8	26.8
250½	163½	Int'l Workplace	197½	- 2¾	0.5	...
172½	123⅛	Johnson Service	150⅝	+ ¼	3.2	16.2
554	360	Journeo♦	476½	- 1	...	19.6
254	178½	Kier Group	239¾	- 1⅝	3.3	18.7
1170	910	Latham (J)♦‡	1057½	- 27½	3.5	11.4
3755	2100	London Security♦	3600		2.7	18.6
301	204	LSL Property Servs	245		4.7	14.8
100½	59½	Macfarlane	73¼	+ 1¾	5.0	18.4
200	71¼	Maintel Holdings♦	72½		...	-6.1
28	15¼	Malvern Int'l♦	21		...	-2.8
448½	310	Mears Group	431	+ 1½	4.1	7.7
282½	101¼	Michael Page	181¾	- 6¼	4.7	62.7
214	134½	Mitie Group‡	207	- 1	2.2	31.4
15¼	0½	MobilityOne#	6¼		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	195		...	6.1
158	84½	Northern Bear♦	117½	+ 2½	6.4	3.9
187½	110	NWF Group♦	139½	+ 2½	6.2	7.5
60	42	PCI-PAL♦	56	+ 4	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10¼		...	-15.3
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0¾	0½	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.2
64	41⅜	Record	44½	- 1⅛	8.2	11.2
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	897	- 3	2.3	14.5
507	344½	**Rentokil**	344½	- 7¼	2.7	24.9
298	222	Restore♦	298	+ 14	2.4	-63.4
7	1½	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	13⅜	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
742½	536⅛	RS Group	701½		3.3	20.3
150	85	RTC Group♦	90		7.5	6.4
113⅜	68	RWS Holdings♦	96½	+ 3½	6.6	-3.6
612	520	Science Group♦	585		1.7	7.8
325¼	205	Serco	241½	+ ¼	1.9	16.8
79⅜	54	Smiths News	73	- ⅜	7.6	6.2
30	13¼	Software Circle♦	15¾	- ¼	...	-75.0
52½	36	Staffline Group♦	43½	- 2½	...	11.2
270½	132¼	SThree	255½	- 3	5.6	18.6
350	146	Synectics♦	185		2.7	8.4
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	0⅝		...	-0.6
74	46	Tribal♦	63	+ 1	2.1	15.0
84¼	58	Vianet♦‡	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP	462½	- 5½	5.8	13.7

Retailing

117⅞	82½	AO World‡	97¼	- ¾	...	15.3
269¼	140	B&M European‡	222½	- 2¾	4.3	13.7
115¼	58¼	Card Factory	75¼	- 1¼	6.6	8.4
1648	1062	CVS Group	1252	+ 1	0.7	17.0
204	113	DFS Furniture	141½	- 3	0.7	13.5
1249	707	Dunelm	869½	- 20½	8.1	11.3
828½	598	Frasers Group	810½	- ½	...	9.3
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1880	- 152	3.7	15.7
248	123¾	Halfords	243	- ½	3.7	16.0
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	788½	- ½	2.8	16.0
895	640½	Inchcape	838½	- 16	4.0	11.6
1⅛	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝		...	-3.5
106½	64	**JD Sports‡**	89½	- 3⅞	1.3	10.4
372½	240¼	**Kingfisher**	308⅝	- 1¼	4.0	22.0
412½	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	405¼	- 4⅜	1.0	31.9
4	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0⅜	- ¼	...	0.6
93¼	61¼	Naked Wines♦	72½	+ ¼	...	-7.8
15310	11200	**Next‡**	14845	- 395	1.8	19.5
397⅞	140¼	Ocado	211¾	+ ¼	...	4.5
241⅞	167¼	Pets at Home	210⅝	- 3¼	3.5	15.3
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	430	- 1	...	89.6
695	172½	Saga	672	- 7	...	...
380⅛	291¼	**Sainsbury's**	359⅜	+ 3¾	3.8	20.8
1120	378⅝	WH Smith	433⅜	- 11⅝	...	-3.9
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13½		...	96.4
510⅜	406⅛	**Tesco**	489½	- 2½	3.0	17.8
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	35½	+ ⅜	8.7	11.6

Technology

252	140⅝	Alfa Financial	163¾	+ 1	5.9	16.1
309	196	Aptitude Software	196		2.8	26.8
129	55	Bango♦	66½		...	-9.1
20	12	BATM Adv Coms	12½		...	-4.0
33	19⅜	Berkeley Res	25¾	+ ¾	...	-67.7
3½	1¼	Blackbird♦	1½		...	-2.4
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦‡	108½		3.1	-120.7
28	12½	Cirata♦	15	+ ¼	...	-3.4
0⅝	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0¼		...	0.5
4962	2222	**Computacenter**	4598	- 112	1.6	31.4
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	267½	- 2½	0.4	45.6
13½	7½	Corero♦	8¼	- ¼	...	-111.0
2644	988	Craneware♦	1164	- 30	2.9	27.9
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	-3.6
9½	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9½	+ ½	...	-8.2
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	10¾	+ ¼	...	-7.4
0⅝	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¼	94½	FDM Group	123¼	- 4½	8.1	23.7
480	114	Filtronic♦	238	+ 3	...	37.1
265	180⅜	GB Group‡	221	- 2	2.0	-7.2
51	24	Ilika♦	26½		...	-6.6
138	56	Ingenta♦	60½	+ ¼	7.4	5.0
178	73	Intercede♦	107		...	18.8
28½	11¾	Iomart♦	12⅜	+ ⅛	...	-1.5
72⅞	4¾	IQE♦	39¼	- ⅞	...	-10.4
4453½	912⅜	LG Electronics	1575¾	+ 85⅞	1.6	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	66		3.1	15.2
14½	2	Nanoco Group	2½	- ⅛	...	-2.2
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38¼	- ½	8.5	-69.5
31	17	Pennant Int'l♦	29½		...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	378½	- 9¼	...	0.9
50	33½	Pulsar Group♦	35½		...	-4.5
551½	398½	QinetiQ‡	506	+ 8½	2.2	25.2
117	88	RM	101½	+ 3½	...	39.0
6½	2¾	Seeing Machines♦	4½		...	-10.9
69½	35½	Shearwater Group♦	62	+ 5½	...	-1.5
1998	1083	Softcat	1930	- 30	1.6	29.0
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	545	Tele Ericsson	731¼	+ 2½	3.2	11.0
1234	771¾	**The Sage Grp**	973¼	+ 5¾	2.3	25.8
91⅝	52½	Touchstar♦‡	85½		3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	342½	- 12½	0.8	...
380	230	Triad Group‡	370		2.4	37.3
330	210	Water Intel♦	307½		...	14.4
150	96⅜	Xaar	120	+ 1	...	-27.9
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	10¾		...	-3.8

Telecoms

436¼	200¾	**Airtel Africa**	333	- 8¼	1.6	24.1
242⅜	173	**BT Group**	201¾	- 2¼	4.1	18.3
169½	106	Currys	167⅞	- ¼	1.8	10.8
1186	687	Gamma Comms	936	- 10	2.4	13.5
247⅛	113¼	Helios Towers	195¾	- 9	0.9	71.2
0⅛	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-4.0
1936	638	Telecom Plus	851	+ 3	5.9	8.4
131⅛	80⅝	**Vodafone**	117⅞	- 1⅝	3.4	-83.5

Transport

260	203½	Braemar‡	228	- 1	3.1	31.5
4992	3365	Clarkson	4730	+ 2	2.4	22.1
683¼	332½	EasyJet	630	+ 5¼	2.1	9.6
240⅛	152½	FirstGroup‡	184¾	+ ½	3.9	8.6
554	320	Fisher (James)	443	- 16	...	-50.9
492⅜	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	431½	- 6½	1.6	7.1
685	458	Irish Cont	677½		2.1	17.0
38⅛	17	Mobico Group	23¾	- 2¾	...	-1.1
7	1¾	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1062	- 9	...	...

Utilities

220¼	152½	**Centrica**	155	+ 2⅜	3.7	-103.3
937½	613⅜	Drax Group	737½	- 7½	4.1	35.6
485	420	Jersey Electricity	445		4.9	12.4
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1190	+ 5½	4.1	18.2
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	463	- 1⅜	6.3	23.9
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3018	- 10	4.2	24.4
2767½	1597	**SSE‡**	2346	- 1	2.9	22.2
1497	1072	**United Utilities‡**	1383	+ 3	3.9	16.1

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ☆ figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

ICE

Money Markets

Wall Street

	July 31 midday	+/-
3M	176.00	-0.07
Abbott Labs	105.29	-0.32
AbbVie	252.43	-4.98
Accenture	164.11	+0.82
Adobe	247.41	-0.49
Aflac	127.68	+0.32
Agilent Techs	137.59	-1.12
Air Prods & Chm	293.37	-6.83
Allstate	266.30	+0.92
Alphabet Cl A	354.35	+20.69
Alphabet Cl C	354.25	+20.57
Altria	69.15	+1.21
Amazon	270.85	+35.35
Amer Elec Power	128.87	+1.08
Amer Express	336.83	-0.69
Amer Tower	171.77	-2.69
Ameren Corp	109.85	+1.10
American Int	78.65	-0.24
American Wtr W	136.01	-0.80
Ameriprise	546.50	+2.04
Ametek	242.33	+2.32
Amgen	383.06	-4.58
Amphenol	161.83	+2.01
Analog Devices	367.68	+1.01
Aon Corp	363.06	-3.51
Apple	300.57	-32.85
Applied Mats	517.53	+15.77
Archer Daniels	79.90	-0.71
Arthur J Gallagher	252.73	-3.73
AT&T	23.16	-0.05
Auto Data Proc	264.70	+0.83
Autodesk	232.60	-2.37
Autozone	3017.61	+11.04
AvalonBay	186.57	-1.21
Baker Hughes	60.35	+0.45
Ball Corp	64.51	-0.80
Bank NY Mellon	156.93	+0.85
Bank of America	62.13	+0.41
Baxter Intl	26.18	-0.57
Becton Dickinsn	164.63	-0.82
Berkshire Hath	511.18	+1.50
Best Buy	86.49	-1.33
BlackRock	1093.36	-5.01
Boeing	215.15	-5.75
Booking Holdings	193.52	+0.28
Boston Sci	45.45	-0.55
Bristol-Myers Sq	64.81	-0.05
Broadcom Ord	387.95	+0.11
Canadian Pacific Kansas	89.07	+0.91
Capital One Fin	207.54	-2.60
Cardinal Health	228.90	+1.83
Caterpillar	816.32	+7.18
Cencora	311.84	-0.39
Centene	61.78	+0.94
Chevron	195.14	+2.83
Church & Dwight	98.54	+0.86
Cigna Group	283.01	-4.65
Cincinnati Fin	176.52	+1.79
Cintas	205.23	-1.56
Cisco Systems	115.51	+1.95
Citigroup	132.88	+0.56
Citizens Financial	71.68	-0.05
Clorox Co	95.83	-0.90
CME	267.94	+0.72
CMS Energy	72.32	+0.06
Coca-Cola	87.43	-1.06
Cognizant Tech	54.51	+0.61
Colgate-Palm	91.24	-0.36
Comcast	23.95	+0.28
Conocophillips	118.80	-0.23
Consd Edison	109.59	-0.07
Constellation Brs	129.12	-1.26
Corning	140.00	+4.78
Costco Whole	950.55	-3.62
Crown Castle Int	75.14	-1.37
CSX	50.27	+0.07
Cummins	637.89	+4.91
CVS Health	105.42	+0.20
Danaher	195.67	-0.50
Deere&co	595.32	-4.16
Delta Air Lines	88.10	-0.49
Devon Energy	44.48	+0.31
Digital Realty Tr.	191.22	-1.97
Dollar General	127.18	-0.32
Dollar Tree	128.24	-0.34
Dominion Energy	69.85	+0.12
Dover	204.18	+0.12
Dow Inc	29.95	-0.14
D.R. Horton	143.89	-1.64
DTE Energy	141.71	+0.01
Duke Energy	125.81	-0.46
Eaton	410.38	+23.49
eBay	113.43	-0.09
Ecolab	277.46	-1.88

	July 31 midday	+/-
Edison Intl	74.34	-4.39
Edwards Life	85.85	-1.07
Electronic Arts	209.87	+0.28
Eli Lilly	1144.40	-10.57
Emmerson Elec	149.62	+0.98
Entergy	108.33	+0.30
EOG Res	146.34	+0.83
Equifax	173.54	-2.59
Equinix	1034.44	-13.09
Essex Property	285.18	+3.32
Estee Lauder	84.33	-0.55
Evrsurce Engy	72.58	-1.26
Exelon	45.84	+0.26
Extra Space Stor	148.46	+0.25
ExxonMobil Hldgs	153.95	
Fastenal	47.24	+0.58
Fedex	309.02	+0.47
Fifth Third	56.54	-0.05
First Solar	214.98	+8.97
FirstEnergy	48.45	-0.26
FIS	44.90	-1.10
Ford Motor	14.53	-0.33
Freeport-Mcm	62.28	-1.16
Garmin	296.11	-1.44
GE Aerospace	360.84	+5.80
Gen Dynamics	382.81	+0.61
General Mills	35.95	-0.47
General Mtrs	88.08	-0.32
Genuine Parts	124.62	-0.20
Gilead Sciences	129.93	-1.35
Global Payments	84.68	-2.16
Goldman Sachs	1020.88	-3.98
Grainger (WW)	1382.48	+26.99
Halliburton	31.95	+0.31
Hartford Insurance	142.90	-0.15
HCA Healthcare	400.43	+4.64
Hershey	175.01	-2.22
Home Depot	331.54	-1.81
Honeywell Intl	243.13	
HP Ent	47.68	+0.54
HP Inc	27.14	+0.28
Humana	368.88	+2.23
Huntington	17.03	-0.05
IBM	220.45	-1.29
ICE Group	153.14	-3.13
IFF	79.11	-0.37
Illinois Tool	285.79	+2.09
Illumina	199.78	-5.32
Ingersoll-Rand	82.81	-1.51
Intel	92.44	+1.31
Intuit	314.55	-0.95
Intuitive Surg	352.58	-0.39
Iron Muntn	123.55	-1.09
Johnsn & Johnsn	257.68	+1.86
Johnson Controls	145.33	+1.45
JP Morgan Chase	353.66	+2.81
Kellanova		
Keurig Dr Pepper	31.21	-0.36
Kimberley-Clark	109.73	-0.46
Kinder Morgan	31.94	+0.28
KLA Corp	186.25	+5.92
Kroger	57.84	-0.02
L3 Harris	277.26	+5.36
Labcorp Hldgs	308.12	-7.41
Lam Research	302.52	+4.80
Lennar	82.74	-1.01
Lockheed Martin	579.32	+5.21
Lowes Co	208.86	-1.22
LyondellBasell	61.49	+1.05
Marathon Petrol	312.29	-1.79
Marriott Intl	373.44	-2.04
Marsh	190.04	-1.47
MartinMarietta	534.96	-5.04
MasterCard	571.40	-5.95
McCormick	50.93	-0.03
McDonald's	269.18	+0.74
McKesson	857.66	-7.85
Medtronic	85.04	-0.67
Merck & Co	130.79	+1.00
Meta Platforms	549.23	+10.20
Metlife	96.74	-0.33
Microchip	75.03	+0.02
Micron	834.41	-40.24
Microsoft	463.66	+12.56
Mondelez	62.10	-0.97
Monster Bvrge	96.40	-1.25
Moodys	477.90	-4.36
Morgan Stanley	210.97	+0.91
Motorala Sols	433.88	+3.06
M&T Bank Corp	247.47	+0.47
Nasdaq Inc	93.97	-1.20
Netapp	177.33	+3.35
Netflix	71.64	-1.53

	July 31 midday	+/-
Newmont Mining	93.40	-2.36
NextEra Energy	87.92	-0.01
Nike	41.69	-0.60
Norfolk Sthn	336.06	+2.13
Northrup Grum	539.27	+4.42
Nucor	256.61	-0.43
Nvidia	198.03	+2.99
Occidental Petr	56.09	+0.14
Omnicom	78.69	-0.92
ONEOK	89.33	+0.26
Oracle	128.36	+0.80
O'Reilly	88.74	+1.38
Paccar	132.65	-1.11
Parker-Hannifin	972.04	+9.25
Paychex	116.20	-0.13
Paypal Hldngs	56.97	-0.69
PepsiCo	139.45	-0.75
Pfizer	25.11	+0.20
PG&E	17.50	-0.28
Philip Morris Intl	192.62	+0.62
Phillips66	209.45	-1.15
PNC Finl	250.14	+1.43
PPG Inds	110.80	-1.23
PPL	35.36	-0.20
Price T Rowe	112.56	-6.72
Procter & Gmbl	143.80	-0.16
Progressive Cp	212.90	-0.38
Prologis	144.49	-1.70
Prudential Finl	122.58	-0.19
Public Serv Ent	77.31	-0.24
Public Storage	322.31	+4.86
PulteGroup	127.37	-1.37
Qualcomm	148.50	-3.10
Quanta Services	666.38	+8.40
Realty Income	63.66	-0.77
Regeneron Pharm	739.00	+0.66
Regions Financial	30.94	+0.09
Republic Serv	210.78	-0.55
Rockwell Auto	474.88	+3.88
Roper Tech	390.56	+1.30
Ross Stores	251.84	-0.73
RTX Corp	214.95	+0.57
RylCaribbean	318.71	-3.23
Salesforce Inc	182.57	+1.86
Schwab (Charles)	105.36	+1.03
Seagate Tech	864.48	+12.79
Sempra	89.20	-0.38
Sherwin-Williams	340.25	-4.58
Simon Prop	231.39	+0.95
SLB	49.22	+0.31
Southern Co	94.82	+0.48
S&P Global	413.61	-1.39
Starbucks	104.99	-0.86
State Street	184.07	+1.25
Stryker	323.07	-24.97
Synchrony Fin	76.12	-1.05
Sysco	85.17	+0.46
Target	143.73	-0.78
Texas Insts	277.07	-1.69
TheKraftHeinz	25.98	-0.40
Thermo Fisher	571.28	-5.49
TJX	157.97	-1.29
Tractor Supply Co	30.52	+0.30
Transdigm Group	1260.33	+10.42
Travelers	378.11	+2.12
Truist Finl Corp	51.87	-0.14
Tyson Foods	60.07	-0.58
Union Pacific	292.27	+2.81
UnitedHealth	420.55	-0.92
Untd Rentals	1078.81	+10.18
UPS	104.38	-0.90
US Bancorp	63.04	+0.14
Valero Energy	306.93	-4.78
Ventas	92.84	+0.92
Verisk Analyts	194.62	-5.73
Verizon Comm	46.42	+0.31
Vertex Pharma	473.63	-8.07
Visa	365.17	-1.10
Vulcan Mats	271.63	+0.39
Walmart	111.48	+0.38
Walt Disney	95.97	-0.19
Waste Mgt	226.86	+0.53
Waters	377.42	-2.88
WEC Engy	109.99	-0.06
Wells Fargo	86.54	+1.11
Welltower	236.60	+0.97
Western Digital	552.20	+19.16
Weyerhaeuser	24.91	+1.41
Williams Cos	71.05	+0.14
Xcel Energy	78.58	+0.35
Xylem	117.33	+0.51
Yum Brands	153.52	-3.48
Zimmer	92.80	-2.16
Zoetis	76.55	+0.52

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	86.86	87.24	86.3	86.49	288323	1354070
	26-Dec				86.46	68	12
	27-Mar				86.36	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.255	96.255	96.25	96.25	26768	399070
	26-Sep	96.105	96.125	96.1	96.11	118510	430959
	26-Dec	95.895	95.915	95.86	95.87	118531	541133
	27-Mar	95.755	95.775	95.695	95.705	88030	382571
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.695	95.72	95.615	95.63	84214	391115
	27-Sep	95.69	95.715	95.6	95.615	68514	257656
	27-Dec	95.72	95.745	95.625	95.64	73249	294366
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.415	97.425	97.4	97.405	73478	658483
	26-Dec	97.24	97.255	97.2	97.215	143854	953571
	27-Mar	97.135	97.155	97.07	97.095	122557	459106
	27-Jun	97.095	97.12	97.02	97.045	109022	480067
	27-Sep	97.095	97.12	97.02	97.04	80876	447880
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.0475	100.0475	100.045	100.045	43	71405
	26-Sep	100.035	100.04	100.035	100.035	1926	74447
	26-Dec	99.975	99.975	99.955	99.97	6086	56249
	27-Mar	99.86	99.865	99.83	99.85	4490	34602
	27-Jun	99.765	99.765	99.725	99.74	4423	24982
	27-Sep	99.69	99.69	99.64	99.65	1580	26979
	27-Dec	99.63	99.63	99.575	99.585	1368	20077
FTSE100	26-Sep	10936	10981.5	10818	10865	77823	472170
	26-Dec				10932.5	12	754
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8669.1	0	
	26-Dec				8713.7	0	

Tradeweb
© 2017 Tradeweb Markets LLC. All rights reserved. The Tradeweb FTSE Gilt Closing Prices information contained herein is proprietary to Tradeweb; may not be copied or re-distributed; is not warranted to be accurate, complete or timely; and does not constitute investment advice. Tradeweb is not responsible for any loss or damage that might result from the use of this information.

Major indices

New York (midday)	
Dow Jones	52440.12 (+232.06)
Nasdaq	25105.82 (-16.36)
S&P 500	7470.12 (+32.49)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	64362.02 (+2494.59)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25884.43 (+25.55)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1099.18 (-5.51)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9137.00 (+14.30)
Frankfurt	
DAX	25629.24 (+17.21)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5628.50 (-45.08)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5685.82 (+30.82)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8509.64 (+24.00)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14346.14 (-46.35)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6358.01 (+13.61)
London	
FTSE100	10868.05 (-29.22)
FTSE250	23975.02 (-104.12)
FTSE350	5902.57 (-16.90)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5038.15 (+0.61)
FTSE All Share	5836.47 (-16.85)
FTSE Non Financials	6394.64 (nc)
TechMark Focus	9179.42 (-18.93)
US$	1.3458 (+0.0030)
Euro	1.1697 (+0.0024)
SDR	0.9865 (+0.0020)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

Commodities

Natural gas $

2.713	-0.045

Light crude oil

84.09	+0.5

Crude oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI SEP 26	84.09	0.5
WTI OCT 26	81.03	0.23
WTI NOV 26	78.57	0.38
WTI DEC 26	76.4	0.28
WTI JAN 27	75.21	0.56

Products

Fuel Oil	465.333	-0.993
Euro Naphtha	741.431	-2.265

ICE futures

Gas oil

Aug	1287.25-1286.5	Dec	1017.5-1017
Sep	1208.25-1207.75	Jan	979.25-978.5
Oct	1141-1140.5		
Nov	1078.25-1077.5		Volume: 163242

Brent

Oct	87.47-87.46	Jan	80.47-80.44
Nov	84.29-84.28	Feb	79.3-79.26
Dec	82.03-82.01		Volume: 587141

Cocoa

Sep	4010 +202	Sep	4122 +187
Dec	4067 +195	Dec	4095 +185
Mar	4152 +192	Mar	4152 +192
May	4145 +197	May	4145 +197
Jul	4153 +190		Volume: 45999

Robusta coffee

Sep	3784 +2	May	3687 +12
Nov	3772 +11	Jul	3671 +15
Jan	3745 +17		
May	3687 +12		Volume: 29253

White sugar

Oct	462.5 +5.6	Aug	462.6 +5.6
Dec	462.7 +6.1	Oct	461.7 +5.5
May	465.2 +6		
May	465.2 +6		Volume: 25529

London grain futures

Liffe wheat (close £/t)

Nov	197 -2.75	May	204 -3
Jan	202.5	Jul	209.25
Mar	204.75		Volume: 11674

London Metal Exchange (Official)

Cash	3Mth	26-Sep
Copper		
13834.5 -8.99	13797.5 -9.5	13841 +4.88
Lead		
1851.5 -2.85	1879 -17.5	1902 -16.51
Zinc		
3710 +33.64	3644 +19	3629 +16.5
Aluminium		
3216.7 -12.18	3187 -6	3179.23 -12.99
Nickel		
17064.4 -12.38	17245 -20	17363.23 -19.89
Nickel		
54928 +313	55270 +332	55359 +276

Eurotop 100

	Close	+/-	12mthhigh	12mthlow	Yield	P/E
ABB Ltd S SF	79.52	-0.48	89.14	51.82	1.18	30.70
Air Liquide Fr	170.72	-5.80	189.80	154.86	1.97	32.72
Airbus Fr	202.20	-3.85	221.30	157.42	1.58	37.72
Allianz G	432.50	+5.40	433.70	334.10	3.95	15.12
Anglo American UK GBP	37.33	+0.12	42.39	20.42	0.78	-15.19
Anheuser-Busch InBev B	75.20	+3.56	74.68	48.87	1.07	28.38
AP Moller-Maersk A Dn KR	16900.00	+390.00	18320.00	11870.00	2.84	43.67
AP Moller-Maersk B Dn KR	17405.00	+380.00	18865.00	11840.00	2.76	44.97
Arcelor Mittal	60.74	+1.80	62.60	26.35	0.86	35.73
ASML Holding Nl	1434.20	-128.80	1741.00	587.80	0.54	72.03
AstraZeneca UK GBP	126.32	-0.38	157.32	98.92	1.89	25.76
Atlas Copco A Sw Kr	201.10	-2.80	208.30	143.30	1.49	37.03
Atlas Copco B Sw Kr	175.85	-4.25	183.45	126.65	1.71	32.38
AXA Fr	44.94	+0.11	45.66	36.55	5.16	12.52
Banco Santander Es	12.32	+0.34	12.59	7.16	1.58	13.54
Barclays UK GBP	5.09	-0.17	5.54	3.53	2.26	11.61
BASF G	50.40	+1.83	55.05	41.48	4.46	27.69
Bayer G	48.05	+1.99	53.92	24.80	0.23	13.06
BBVA Es	24.20	+1.34	24.02	13.96	3.08	93.08
BHP Group UK GBP	31.34	+0.03	34.95	18.73	3.26	23.72
BMW G	59.30	+2.34	97.92	56.40	7.42	4.99
BNP Paribas Fr	109.66	+3.74	109.34	65.12	4.71	11.46
BP UK GBP	5.53	+0.04	6.09	3.97	4.48	
Brit Amer Tobacco GBP	45.70	-0.02	53.26	36.77	5.36	13.02
BT Group UK GBP	2.01	+0.08	2.42	1.73	4.13	18.30
Centrica UK GBP	1.55	-0.08	2.20	1.53	3.66	-103.33
Christian Dior Fr	433.60	+10.60	611.50	414.80	3.30	15.02
Compagnie de Saint Gobain	81.28	+7.12	102.35	65.88	2.83	12.13
Danone Fr	67.52	-2.48	80.14	60.64	3.33	26.07
Deutsche Bank G	31.88	+1.28	34.26	23.82	3.14	10.09
Deutsche Telekom G	26.76	+0.37	34.36	23.53	3.74	13.58
Diageo UK GBP	16.34	+0.72	21.42	12.96	3.85	20.77
Enel It	9.80	-0.13	10.31	7.58	5.00	26.48
Engie (FR)	27.11	-0.68	29.89	17.20	3.80	17.84
Eni	23.98	+1.02	25.02	14.48	4.59	17.01
EON G	18.71	-0.88	20.39	14.60	3.05	28.36
Fresenius Medical Care Ag & Co	44.52	+0.72	52.96	35.11	2.36	57.08
GlaxoSmKline UK GBP	19.32	+0.12	22.82	12.89	3.62	13.69
Glencore Xstrata	5.39	+0.02	7.07	2.75	2.34	179.63
Heineken NV Nl	78.54	+2.12	80.24	63.90	2.42	16.85
Henkel KgaA G	71.10	+0.50	77.25	57.85	2.88	24.27
Henkel KgaA Pref G	75.62	+0.94	84.20	61.28	2.74	14.19
Hermes Intl SCA Fr	1531.50	-111.50	2300.00	1465.50	1.18	34.86
HSBC UK GBP	15.76	+0.23	16.05	9.09	3.53	17.53
Iberdrola Es	20.65	-0.56	22.08	15.21	2.67	37.41
Imperial Tobacco UK GBP	28.25	+0.02	36.32	26.26	5.90	11.25
Inditex Es	56.44	+1.98	58.28	40.80	2.51	127.98
ING Nl	30.44	+1.49	30.36	19.32	3.73	15.37
Intesa Sanpaolo It	6.54	+0.10	6.56	4.81	5.75	28.43
Linde G	479.33	-32.95	548.20	387.78	1.34	31.62
Lloyds Bank UK GBP	1.15	+0.01	1.18	0.74	3.50	16.39
L'Oreal Fr	386.95	+12.25	408.35	338.85	1.86	30.44
LVMH Fr	475.15	+13.45	654.70	440.00	2.74	21.74
Mercedez-Benz Group AG	46.73	+1.96	62.34	42.62	7.49	4.59
Munich Re G	522.20	+13.20	611.80	437.40	4.60	24.94
National Grid GBP	11.90	-0.47	14.29	10.00	4.07	18.17
Nestle S SF	81.01	+0.34	87.09	69.90	3.83	23.08
Novartis S SF	126.60	-0.30	131.50	91.56	2.92	41.51
Orange	16.57	+0.41	18.80	13.07	4.77	20.21
Pernod Ricard NV Fr	67.82	+4.92	107.45	58.60	6.93	10.56
Phillips Elect Nl	22.74	-0.42	27.70	20.90	3.74	45.48
Prudential UK GBP	11.16	+0.20	12.38	9.10	1.76	9.74
Reckitt Benckiser UK GBP	52.40	+2.90	65.23	36.64	4.13	11.19
Richemont S SF	190.90	-2.15	198.25	127.20	1.73	40.71
Rio Tinto UK GBP	71.74	+3.05	91.17	43.45	4.82	15.73
Rolls-Royce UK GBP	14.68	+0.52	15.33	9.90	0.75	21.15
RWE AG	57.18	-1.62	62.00	33.72	2.10	23.06
Sanofi Aventis Fr	74.47	-1.56	91.15	71.25	5.53	9.51
SAP G	157.68	+17.48	258.70	127.50	1.59	25.68
Schneider Electric Fr	289.60	+21.55	293.70	208.80	1.45	33.71
Shell	33.19	+0.14	37.59	25.54	4.55	10.95
Siemens G	282.65	+10.40	284.65	198.00	1.89	26.84
Standard Chartered UK GBP	21.88	+0.51	22.78	12.85	2.36	15.07
Swatch Gp BR S SF	180.30	+10.40	223.10	133.10	2.50	48.21
Swiss Re AG S SF	134.85	+0.35	156.80	114.05	4.67	10.33
Telefonica Es	3.58	-0.01	4.89	3.24	6.78	2.37
Tenaris SA It	24.94	-0.58	27.82	14.54	3.10	7.51
Tesco UK GBP	4.89	+0.09	5.10	4.07	2.96	17.80
TotalEnergies	76.42	+0.52	81.34	49.24	4.58	11.09
UBS SA SF	42.55	+0.24	44.44	28.25	2.01	21.71
Vinci	122.55	+4.20	143.15	112.40	4.12	14.17
Vivendi	1.60	-0.30	3.38	1.65	2.51	14.51
Vodafone UK GBP	1.18	+0.03	1.31	0.81	3.36	-83.54
Volkswagen G	74.66	+3.20	109.15	69.20	7.05	5.62
Volvo B Sw Kr	364.30	+9.50	367.50	244.90	3.57	21.51
Zurich Fin S SF	615.80	-7.20	626.00	521.00	4.87	19.26

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%

ECB Refi 2.40%

Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7410	8.7281	-147.419	-418.472
Euro	1.1691	1.1676	-14.81	-42.51
Montreal	1.8895	1.8858	-25.67	-77.62
New York	1.3467	1.3462	-0.43	0.1
Oslo	12.7792	12.8327	48.97	165.03
Tokyo	214.3750	214.8900	-52.17	-157.2
Zurich	1.0885	1.0839	-37.11	-110.18

FTSE volumes (000s)

3i Group	2,341	InterCont'l Hotels	198
Aberdeen Group	3,930	Intertek Group	536
AB Foods	1,244	Intl Cons Airlines	22,508
Admiral	480	Investec	4,036
Airtel Africa	4,418	JD Sports	13,528
Alliance Witan	812	Kingfisher	5,020
Ang Am	3,260	Land Sec	3,315
Antofagasta	838	Legal & Gen	16,886
AstraZeneca	1,904	Lion Finance	101
Autotrader Group	3,087	Lloyds Bkg Gp	167,072
Aviva	8,190	LondonMetric	7,050
Babcock Intl	828	Lon Stock Ex	1,637
BAE Sys	6,146	M&G	3,837
Barclays	32,454	Marks & Spen	6,223
Barratt Redrow	14,002	Melrose Ind	10,129
Beazley	1,131	Metlen Energy	115
BP	37,026	Natl Grid	9,178
Brit. Amer. Tob	2,915	NatWest Group	47,018
British Land	2,456	Next	237
BT Group	16,559	Pearson	3,444
Bunzl	510	Pershing Square	258
Burberry	1,957	Persimmon	2,102
Centrica	15,588	Polar CapTech	2,870
Coca-Cola Europac	198	Prudential	7,850
Coca-Cola HBC	433	Reckitt Benck	1,185
Compass	2,446	RELX	4,296
Computacenter	301	Rentokil Initial	22,599
ConvaTec	6,444	Rio Tinto	1,914
Croda	517	Rolls-Royce	26,126
DCC Energy	1,074	Sainsbury	19,360
Diageo	3,497	Schroders	9,313
Diploma	324	Scot Mort Inv Tst	1,703
Endeavour	503	Segro	4,042
Entain	2,666	Severn Trent	827
Experian	4,449	Shell	8,122
F&C Inv Trust	1,859	Smith & Nephew	4,385
Fresnillo	632	Smiths Gp	846
Games Workshop	62	Spirax Group	185
Glencore	24,068	SSE	1,910
GSK	6,864	Standard Chart	5,037
Haleon	25,724	Standard Life	1,915
Halma	1,731	St James's Place	2,964
Hiscox	1,241	Tesco	12,005
Howden Joinery	1,416	The Sage Grp	3,947
HSBC	20,240	Tritax Big Box	6,882
ICG	912	Unilever	3,978
IG Group	3,443	Utd. Utilities	2,024
IMI	1,025	Vodafone	64,799
Imperial Brands	2,214	Weir Group	1,548
Informa	2,754	Whitbread	320

Gold/precious metals

Bullion: Open $4103.72

Close $4043.41 **High** $4111.79

Low $4021.079

AM $4052.20 **PM** $4026.60

Platinum $1647.843

Silver $57.4755

Palladium $1282.018

Dollar rates

Australia	1.42360-1.42440
Canada	1.40294-1.40305
Denmark	6.49097-6.49234
Euro	0.86830-0.86870
Hong Kong	7.84170-7.84209
Japan	159.18100-159.19099
Malaysia	4.08300-4.09000
Norway	9.48870-9.49250
Singapore	1.28315-1.28322
Sweden	9.53112-9.53298
Switzerland	0.80841-0.80846

Other Sterling

Argentine peso	2005.36035-2005.36243
Australian dollar	1.91712-1.91731
Bahrain dinar	0.50660-0.50860
Brazilian real	6.82810-6.83010
Euro	1.16900-1.16980
Hong Kong dollar	10.55700-10.56100
Indian rupee	128.50999-128.59000
Indonesian rupiah	24292.63086-24332.63086
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41570-0.41770
Malaysian ringgit	5.50110-5.50310
New Zealand dollar	2.29096-2.29142
Singaporean dollar	1.72765-1.72799
South African rand	22.26300-22.27250
UAE dirham	4.94590-4.94790

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.91712 (+0.00142)
Canada $	1.88913 (+0.00386)
Denmark Kr	8.74055 (+0.01261)
Euro	1.169 (+0.0012)
Hong Kong $	10.557 (nc)
Hungary	425.34 (+2.08)
Indonesia	24292.63 (+13.6)
Israel	4.1234 (-0.0022)
Japan Yen	214.349 (-0.538)
New Zealand $	2.29096 (+0.00071)
Norway Kr	12.7748 (-0.069)
Poland	5.0352 (+0.01585)
Russia	106.722 (-1)
S Africa	22.263 (+0.06342)
Sweden Kr	12.8316 (-0.0047)
Switzerland Fr	1.08846 (+0.00461)
Turkey Lira	64.0004 (+0.1359)
USA $	1.3465 (+0.0002)

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

Unit-linked insurance investments

ABBEY LIFE
01202 292373
80 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth
BH8 8AL

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American Ser 4	6056.80	6375.60	+17.80	...
Custodian S4	679.80	715.60	+6.90	...
Equity Ser 4	1175.30	1237.10	+28.10	...
Ethical S4	524.90	552.50	+10.90	...
European S4	1415.00	1489.40	+17.50	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	794.50	836.40	+4.10	...
High Inc Ser 4	3604.80	3794.50	+60.30	...
International S4	1239.00	1304.20	+1.00	...
Japan Ser 4	812.00	854.70	-12.90	...
Man Ser 4	3087.60	3250.10	+20.50	...
Money Ser 4	583.10	613.80	+0.20	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	981.30	1033.00	+2.50	...

Formerly Hill Samuel Life Assurance Ltd

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Fund	4520.90	4784.00	+32.30	...
European Fund	7452.60	7886.30	+92.30	...
Fixed Intl	890.10	941.90	+4.70	...
Income Fund	3928.00	4156.70	+121.10	...
International	3369.30	3565.40	+3.00	...
Managed Series A	2930.30	3100.90	+22.30	...
Managed Units	5390.50	5674.20	+41.30	...
Money Series A	533.30	564.30	+0.30	...
Money Units	759.00	799.00	+0.40	...
Property Series A	1365.10	1444.60	+3.60	...
Property Units	2553.60	2688.00	+6.80	...
Smaller Cos	2915.40	3085.00	-15.40	...

Formerly Target Life Assurance Co Ltd

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit	392.30	412.90	+0.20	...
Financial Ser 1	420.80	443.00	+2.80	...
Fixed Interest	588.90	619.90	+3.10	...
Managed	2841.20	2990.80	+21.50	...
Mngd Growth	1225.90	1290.40	+7.90	...
Property	799.40	841.50	+2.00	...
TSB Intl	2365.90	2490.40	+2.00	...

AEGON SCOTTISH EQUITABLE
08456 100010
Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh EH12 9SE

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	3145.30	3310.84	-55.29	...
Cash	305.87	321.97	+0.11	...
Distribution	105.34	110.88	-0.56	...
Ethical	793.25	835.00	+11.16	...
European	1860.82	1958.75	+2.61	...
Fixed Interest	501.96	528.38	+0.24	...
Global	528.91	556.75	-6.01	...
International	1598.22	1682.34	-17.99	...
Japan	661.72	696.55	-9.44	...
Mixed	1208.05	1271.63	-2.58	...
Pacific	2340.73	2463.93	-86.78	...
Technology	10014.10	10541.10	-472.90	...
UK Equity	1198.52	1261.60	+20.31	...

ALBA LIFE
50 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR
0141 248 2000
Formerly Britannia
Life

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
European	2339.60	2462.70	+3.10	...
Far East	853.30	898.20	-35.30	...
Fixed Interest	812.70	855.50	+3.80	...
International	2149.80	2263.00	-32.00	...
Japan	1057.70	1113.40	-33.80	...
Managed Fund	1981.40	2085.70	-4.00	...
Money Market	443.50	466.90	+0.10	...
North America	2246.60	2364.90	-6.90	...
Property	962.60	1013.30	+2.40	...
UK Equity	3996.40	4206.70	+72.50	...

Pensions

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity	2923.90	3077.80	+59.20	...
European	3080.20	3242.30	+4.90	...
Far Eastern	729.50	767.90	-35.80	...
Fixed Interest	840.60	884.80	+5.10	...
International	1976.00	2080.00	-32.60	...
Japan	545.70	574.40	-20.30	...
Managed	1465.30	1542.40	-3.60	...
Money Market	541.80	570.30	+0.20	...
North America	3551.70	3738.60	-12.30	...
Property	910.20	958.10	+2.40	...

AXA SUN LIFE
PO Box 1810, Bristol BS99 5SN
AXA Assurance-02476 236600
Sun Life-0117 989 3000
AXA Equity & Law-02476 235400
Life Assnce-AXA Equity & Law Series 6.1% AMC

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balced Ser 6	3376.00	3553.70	+19.80	...
Europe Ser 6	2714.80	2857.70	+34.30	...
UK Equities Ser 6	5709.10	6009.60	+126.80	...

Life Funds-Sun Life (Inc Birmingham Midshires) & AXA Assurance 1% AMC

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Acc	523.90	551.50	+0.10	...
Distribution Fund	378.60	398.50	+3.50	...
Equity Acc	8349.30	8788.70	+185.50	...
European	1282.10	1349.60	+16.20	...
Far Eastern Acc	3181.40	3348.80	-112.50	...
Fixed Int Acc	971.90	1023.10	+5.40	...
Global Eqty Acc	3819.50	4020.50	-46.60	...
Japan Acc	494.70	520.80	-2.20	...
Managed Acc	4138.20	4356.00	+24.40	...
North Amer Acc	4767.10	5018.00	-58.10	...
Pacific Acc	2458.00	2587.30	-120.70	...
Property Acc	1223.80	1288.20	+8.50	...

BARCLAYS LIFE ASSURANCE CO LTD
0845 603 5000
Level 12, 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
500 Accum	2118.17	2229.65	+29.43	...
America Acc	4478.83	4714.56	-14.44	...
Comb Inc Acc	3686.78	3880.82	-7.71	...
Equity Acc	5655.16	5952.80	+78.32	...
Far East Gwth	2188.29	2303.47	-192.11	...
Gilt 2 Init	186.53	196.35	+0.88	...
Gilt Edged Acc	849.48	894.19	+4.49	...
Inter 2 Init	667.01	702.12	-11.66	...
International Acc	3035.53	3195.30	-51.29	...
Japan Acc	653.37	687.76	-16.22	...
Managed 2 Init	671.42	706.76	-1.80	...
Managed Acc	3045.29	3205.56	-6.37	...
Managed Alpha	2421.50	2548.95	+33.65	...
Money Acc	486.66	512.27	+0.21	...
Prop 2 Init	218.47	229.97	...	...
Property Acc	988.76	1040.80	+0.59	...
UK Growth Acc	1787.25	1881.32	+24.77	...
Univ Tech Acc	1325.03	1394.77	-22.39	...

& AXA Assurance 1% AM

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity 2 Init	1239.25	1304.47	+16.46	...

CANADA LIFE
01707 651122
2-6 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Fund	578.70	609.10	...	...
Equity Fund	4057.00	4270.00	...	...
European	2488.00	2618.00	+12.00	...
Fixed Interest	950.00	1000.00	+1.70	...
International	3669.00	3862.00	...	...
Intl Mgd	5065.00	5331.00	-69.00	...
Japanese	538.90	567.20	-7.80	...
Managed Fund	3470.00	3652.00	...	...
Money	603.20	634.90	+0.30	...
Multiple Inv	4436.00	4669.00	-10.00	...
North Amer	3401.00	3580.00	-57.00	...
Property Fund	1789.00	1883.00	...	...
UK Equity	6426.00	6764.00	+155.00	...
UK Property	1265.00	1331.00	...	...

CLERICAL MEDICAL INVESTMENT GROUP
Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH 0117 9290566
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	325.50	342.60	+0.10	...
Dist Acc S2	237.50	237.50	+1.70	...
Fidelity Bal	1469.30	1546.60	-2.20	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	520.30	547.60	+1.40	...
Non Eqty	430.20	452.70	+0.90	...
Nth American	4836.90	5091.40	-30.40	...
Property	749.30	788.70	+1.10	...
UK Gwth	1940.90	2043.00	+37.70	...
With Prof Bd S2	127.50	127.50	...	...
With Profits Flex	135.20	135.20	...	...
With Profits Reg	434.60	457.50	+0.20	...

Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	382.80	402.90	+0.20	...
European	3102.90	3266.20	-17.80	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	599.10	630.60	+2.00	...
Halifax	149.80	157.60	+0.10	...
Nth American	8069.50	8494.10	-46.10	...
PP Bal Pens	1540.00	1621.00	-2.30	...
PP Caut Pens	458.80	482.90	+4.00	...
PP UK Gth Pens	1801.40	1896.10	+39.00	...
PP UK Prop Pens	839.30	883.40	+1.40	...
With Profits Reg	835.90	879.90	+0.50	...
With Profits Spec	828.10	871.70	+0.60	...

COUNTRYWIDE ASSURED
Harbour House, Portwat, Preston, Lancs
PR2 2PR
CA Funds 0800 262536

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Life	247.30	260.30	+0.10	...
Deposit Pen	353.70	372.30	+0.20	...
Intl Life	1523.30	1603.40	-20.00	...
Intl Pen	2228.50	2345.70	-38.20	...
Mgd Life	1081.70	1138.60	-1.10	...
Mgd Pen	1613.50	1698.40	-1.70	...
UK Eqty Life	1190.60	1253.20	+19.70	...
UK Eqty Pen	1577.70	1660.70	+28.80	...

CWA Series Funds 0870 600 0014

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Fd	2512.70	2644.90	+34.40	...
Glob Cash	403.10	424.30	+0.20	...
Glob Eqty	5338.10	5619.10	-26.80	...
Glob Fxd Int	1368.40	1440.40	+2.00	...
Glob Mgd	3207.20	3376.00	+9.30	...
Glob Prop	704.20	741.30	+0.70	...
Managed Fd	4007.80	4218.70	+11.60	...
Property Fd	578.90	609.40	+0.60	...

FRIENDS PROVIDENT
01722 413366
Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	358.50	377.40	+0.20	...
European	1774.80	1868.20	+29.60	...
Fixed Inter Life	700.40	737.30	+3.80	...
Index Linked	537.60	565.80	-0.50	...
Managed	1468.50	1545.80	+4.00	...
North American	1892.40	1992.00	-22.40	...
Overseas Equity	2647.20	2786.50	-31.60	...
Pacific Basin	818.40	861.40	-29.70	...
Property	763.50	803.70	+1.60	...
Stewardship	2386.50	2512.10	+50.70	...
UK Equity	2458.20	2587.60	+57.40	...

Formerly London & Manchester Assurance

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Ex Cap ‡	440.30	...	+10.20	...
Equity Life ‡	2570.70	...	+60.10	...
Fixed Interest ‡	725.10	...	+4.00	...
Fxd Int Ex Cap ‡	127.70	...	+0.70	...
Gtd Dep Ex Cap ‡	62.40	...	+0.10	...
Guaranteed Deposit ‡	469.10	...	+0.30	...
Inter Life ‡	2554.90	...	-30.50	...
Intl Ex Cap ‡	444.80	...	-5.40	...
Prop Ex Cap ‡	116.20	...	+0.30	...
Prop Life ‡	656.70	...	+1.30	...

FP Life Assurance Ex NM

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	5040.00	5305.20	-58.80	...
Deposit	595.10	626.40	+0.40	...
European	4282.80	4508.30	+71.50	...
Fixed Interest	1450.50	1526.90	+7.90	...
Income Acc	6314.60	6646.90	+202.40	...
Income Dist	946.40	996.20	+30.30	...
International	2608.10	2745.40	-31.20	...
Managed	3254.30	3425.60	+8.80	...
Property	2131.50	2243.70	+4.30	...
Singapore & Mal	1835.80	1932.40	-91.00	...
Tokyo Fund	1506.80	1586.10	-6.30	...
UK Equity	3370.30	3547.70	+78.90	...

Friends Prov (London & Manchester) Ass Ltd Fd

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Flexible Acc ‡	2101.20	...	+5.80	...
Flexible Cap ‡	363.10	...	+1.00	...
Inv Trust Acc ‡	5672.50	...	-1.80	...
Inv Trust Cap ‡	953.70	...	-0.40	...

GUARDIAN
01253 733151
Ballam Road, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire FY8 4JZ

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit	497.10	523.20	+0.30	...
Equity Life	6785.70	7142.90	+94.40	...
European	1098.50	1156.40	-10.00	...
Fixed Interest	1730.20	1821.20	+7.10	...
Index Linked	653.60	688.00	+2.60	...
Inter Life	4390.00	4621.10	-39.90	...
Managed Life	3749.80	3947.20	-7.70	...
North American	2255.80	2374.50	-20.40	...
Pacific	1361.90	1433.60	-12.30	...
Prop Life	1424.70	1499.70	-2.90	...

HALIFAX LIFE LTD
PO Box 285, York Y01 1YB 01904 611110
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced	125.66	132.27	-0.28	...
Foundation	135.07	142.18	-0.22	...
Opportunity	171.68	180.71	-0.44	...

Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced S2	137.24	144.45	-0.34	1.00
Foundation S2	144.46	152.06	-0.22	1.00
Opportunity S2	186.44	196.24	-0.58	1.00

LEGAL & GENERAL INVESTMENT MGMT
0203 1243000
One Coleman Street, EC2R 5AA

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
British Opp	1156.10	1217.00	+20.00	...
Cash	483.90	509.40	+0.20	...
Equity	7083.50	7456.40	+126.40	...
Fixed Interest	1350.40	1421.50	+6.20	...
Index Linked Gilt	587.80	618.70	+1.80	...
International	3800.60	4000.70	-27.40	...
Life Property	1560.00	1642.10	+0.80	...
Managed	4087.30	4302.50	-14.50	...

LINCOLN FINANCIAL GROUP
Barnett Way, Barnwood, Gloucester, GL4 3RZ
01452 371371 For Further prices 0800 7315139
Life

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Mgd 3	2034.60	2141.60	-12.60	...
European	1189.20	1251.70	+12.60	...
Far Eastern	2458.50	2587.80	-170.40	...
Green	780.00	821.00	+3.10	...
International	885.90	932.50	-16.00	...
Japan	378.00	397.80	+0.60	...
North Amer	6264.50	6594.20	-135.20	...
UK Equity Gwth	2840.80	2990.30	+49.70	...

Pension

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Mgd 3	4861.80	5117.60	-34.90	...
European	2000.90	2106.20	+25.80	...
Far Eastern	4145.50	4363.60	-320.00	...
Green	1326.70	1396.50	+6.50	...
International	1411.20	1485.40	-30.60	...
Japan	501.30	527.60	+0.80	...
North Amer	19912.70	20960.70	-547.60	...
UK Eqty Gwth	5276.90	5554.60	+113.20	...
UK Fxd Int	1130.70	1190.20	+6.90	...

LLOYDS TSB LIFE LTD
01634 834000
Mountbatten Hse, Chatham, Kent
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity	2338.30	2461.40	-3.80	...
Managed	4905.20	4905.20	-13.50	...
Income	5144.70	5415.50	+92.20	...
Managed Inv	2503.60	2635.40	-7.10	...

Life Funds-Series Two Current Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	5341.50	5622.60	-13.10	...
Balanced ‡	783.00	...	+2.00	...
Cash	455.50	479.50	+0.10	...
European Gth	1249.60	1315.30	-3.00	...
Fixed Interest	734.00	772.70	+2.00	...
German Growth	2388.10	2513.70	+55.20	...
Income	4712.00	4960.00	+84.30	...
Japan Growth	470.80	495.60	-1.20	...
Managed Inv	2746.70	2891.30	-7.70	...
Pacific Basin	1976.80	2080.90	-4.70	...
Property	1757.20	1849.60	+2.50	...
Smllr Cos Recov	6792.40	7149.90	+124.10	...
Worldwide Gth	3121.20	3285.50	-7.60	...

Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American Pens	3539.50	3725.80	-9.90	...
Cash Pen	354.40	373.00	+0.20	...
European Pen	2470.80	2600.90	-7.00	...
Far East Pen	893.50	940.50	-2.50	...
Fixed Int Pen	521.90	549.40	+1.90	...
FTSE 100	610.90	643.10	+14.00	...
Managed Pen	1434.40	1509.90	-4.30	...
Property Pen	1101.90	1159.90	+1.70	...
UK Equity Pen	1215.50	1279.50	+27.20	...

LONDON LIFE
0117 984 7777
Spectrum Bond Street, Bristol, BS1 3AL

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit	570.20	570.20	+0.20	...
Deposit P	793.70	793.70	+0.40	...
Equity	5858.60	5858.60	+106.60	...
Equity A	1296.10	1364.40	+23.60	...
Equity P	5330.20	5330.20	+114.30	...
Fixed Int A	492.70	518.70	+2.10	...
Fixed Int P	1788.50	1788.50	+9.40	...
Fixed Interest	1164.50	1164.50	+4.90	...
Index Stock A	477.00	502.20	+1.70	...
Index Stock P	783.10	783.10	+3.40	...
Indexed Stock	638.80	638.80	+2.30	...
International	2249.70	2249.70	-35.80	...
International A	1340.30	1410.90	-21.40	...
International P	3131.30	3131.30	-51.50	...
Mixed	3253.30	3253.30	-25.60	...
Mixed A	1019.60	1073.30	-8.00	...
Mixed P	3310.80	3310.80	-29.20	...
Property	872.20	872.20	+0.40	...
Property A	372.30	391.90	+0.10	...
Property P	728.90	728.90	+0.30	...

MERCHANT INVESTORS ASSURANCE CO LTD
St Bartholomews House, Lewins Mead
Bristol BS1 2NH

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Far East	1106.80	1165.10	-28.60	...
Gilt Edged	1320.00	1389.50	+10.70	...
Interest Fund	610.40	642.50	+0.20	...
Intl Equity	2921.90	3075.70	+17.90	...
Managed Fd	1448.70	1524.90	+5.30	...
North American	1189.70	1252.30	+17.40	...
Property	1644.20	1730.70	+4.80	...
UK Equity	1608.50	1693.20	+76.30	...

MGM ASSURANCE
MGM House, Heene Road, Worthing
BN11 2DY 01903 836000

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Acc	418.75	440.79	+0.23	...
Fixed Interest Acc	1243.80	1309.26	+1.95	...
Managed Acc	2087.04	2196.89	+0.71	...
Property	250.20	263.30	...	...
Property Acc	916.26	964.49	+2.92	...

NAT WEST LIFE ASSCE LTD
PO Box 886, Trinity Quay, Bristol BS99 5LJ

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Growth Mgd Pens	784.01	825.28	+4.98	...

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE
Society- Ex NUAM Funds
PO Box 140, Norwich NR3 1PP
01603 622200

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Fund	692.00	728.42	+0.43	...
Eqity Fund	23441.04	24674.78	+561.93	...
Fixed Int Fd	1652.05	1739.00	+10.76	...
Higher Inc Plus	253.13	266.45	+0.22	...
Intl Fund	1876.14	1974.88	-8.85	...
Managed Fund	8449.60	8894.32	+45.38	...
Property Fd	2682.53	2823.72	+3.21	...

Formerly Commercial Union

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	344.70	362.80	+0.20	...
Fxd Int	514.10	541.10	+3.30	...
Index-Lnkd	475.00	500.10	+1.00	...
Int Equity	2028.90	2135.70	-9.70	...
Property	1895.20	1995.00	+10.00	...
UK Equity	2782.40	2928.90	+66.30	...
Var Ann (5) ‡	410.90	...	+7.70	...
Var Ann Acc (5) ‡	8282.50	...	+167.60	...

Formerly General Accident

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	2399.60	2525.90	-4.90	...
Cash Deposit	292.10	307.50	+0.20	...
European Equity	1492.20	1570.70	+14.10	...
Fixed Int	431.70	454.50	+2.70	...
Index-Linked	461.20	485.50	+1.00	...
International	1332.10	1402.20	+0.80	...
Japan Equity	585.10	615.90	-8.30	...
Japan Smllr Cos	598.50	630.00	-8.50	...
Managed	957.80	1008.20	+5.00	...
Pacific Fund	1809.90	1905.20	-166.90	...
Property	650.50	684.70	+0.70	...
UK Equity	1593.00	1676.80	+38.10	...
Unitised Profit	464.30	488.70	+0.40	...

Formerly Provident Mutual

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Initial	93.20	98.10	+0.10	...
Deposit Ord	361.30	380.30	+0.20	...
Equity Init	1060.70	1116.50	+25.30	...
Equity Ord	4175.70	4395.40	+99.80	...
Fixed Int Init	169.30	178.20	+1.10	...
Fixed Int Ord	654.50	688.90	+4.20	...
I-Linked Gilt Init	166.30	175.10	+0.40	...
I-Linked Gilt Ord	582.60	613.30	+1.30	...
Managed Initial	582.20	612.90	+3.10	...
Managed Ord	2267.70	2387.10	+12.00	...
Oseas Equity Init	644.70	678.60	-3.10	...
Oseas Equity Ord	2657.60	2797.50	-12.70	...
Property Init	272.70	287.00	+0.40	...
Property Ord	1047.50	1102.60	+1.20	...

NPI
020 7477 5567
55 Moorgate, London EC2

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Americas	3958.30	4166.70	-57.60	...
Deposit	401.10	422.30	+0.20	...
Far East	2660.90	2801.00	-199.80	...
Fixed Interest	947.20	997.10	+4.00	...
Indexed Gilt	609.50	641.60	+2.10	...
Managed	2223.80	2340.90	-15.20	...
Overseas Equity	3581.70	3770.30	-47.30	...
UK Equity	3464.70	3647.10	+70.00	...

PEARL
The Pearl Centre, Lynch Wood, Peterborough
PE2 6FY 01733 470 470

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Inv Equity	8608.90	9062.00	+151.10	...
Inv Managed	5146.10	5417.00	-36.70	...
Inv Prop Ac Grs	998.30	1050.90	+0.60	...
Inv Prop Dist	315.90	332.60	+0.20	...
Ret Managed	6265.40	6595.20	-43.10	...

PHOENIX LIFE LTD
Edward Pavilion, Liverpool L3 4SL 0151 239 3000
For further fund prices please ring: 0800 731 2031
Lifestyle Bond Funds (Post 29/01/01)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cautious Mgd ‡	321.70	...	+0.90	...
Deposit ‡	173.50	...	+0.10	...
Equity ‡	417.90	...	+7.20	...
Equity Inc ‡	429.40	...	+7.00	...
European ‡	532.20	...	+1.10	...
Far East ‡	590.60	...	-22.80	...
Fixed Int ‡	206.50	...	+1.00	...
FTSE All Share Tkr ‡	440.70	...	+5.40	...
Income Dist I ‡	127.00	...	+1.40	...
Income Dist II ‡	127.10	...	+1.30	...
International ‡	488.70	...	-5.60	...
Japan Grth ‡	314.80	...	-9.80	...
Managed ‡	386.30	...	-0.20	...
North America ‡	767.20	...	-2.20	...
Pacific Grth ‡	864.20	...	-34.00	...
Property ‡	420.30	...	+0.30	...
UK Leader ‡	426.00	...	+7.50	...
UK Smlr Cos ‡	349.90	...	-0.60	...
With Profits ‡	184.46	...	+0.18	...

Other Life & Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Pens Unit W Prof	301.51	317.38	+0.34	...
With Profits Bd	224.14	224.14	+0.20	...

Pensions Solution Funds (Post 6/4/2001)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Grth ‡	374.00	...	+0.80	...
Cash Deposit ‡	190.70	...	+0.10	...
Equity ‡	449.20	...	+9.20	...
Equity Inc ‡	460.40	...	+9.20	...
European ‡	657.30	...	+1.60	...
Far East ‡	750.70	...	-34.30	...
Fixed Int ‡	233.00	...	+1.60	...
FTSE All Share Tkr ‡	533.70	...	+8.20	...
Index Linked ‡	251.10	...	+1.10	...
International ‡	625.70	...	-8.40	...
Managed Grth ‡	442.50	...	-0.50	...
Pens Protector ‡	195.90	...	+2.40	...
Property ‡	565.70	...	+0.40	...
UK Leader ‡	488.00	...	+8.30	...
Unitised W Prof ‡	255.81	...	+0.28	...

PRUDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LIFE FUNDS
0345 601601
55 King's Road, Reading, RG1 3AH

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Euro Fund	2777.50	2923.70	+52.90	...
N American Fd	2937.40	3092.00	+13.80	...

Scottish Amicable Life Fds (First Series)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Fund	584.70	615.50	+0.10	...
Equity Fund	9120.30	9600.30	+173.60	...
Fixed Interest	1190.90	1253.60	+2.90	...
Intl Fund	4230.00	4452.70	+58.10	...
L&G UK Prop S2	114.30	120.30	...	...
Managed Fund	4318.70	4546.00	+38.30	...

PRUDENTIAL LIFE FUNDS
01786 448844
PO Box 14962, Craigforth, Stirling, FK9 4ZD

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
BonusBond	377.70	397.60	+9.30	...
Prud Inher Bd (Cap) ‡	131.10	...	+0.80	...
Prud Inher Bd (Inc) ‡	80.20	...	+5.90	...

Scottish Amicable Life Fds (First Series)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	414.20	436.00	+0.20	...
Equity	3585.40	3774.10	+68.50	...
Fixed Interest	882.20	928.60	+2.20	...
Index-Linked	513.60	540.60	+0.10	...
International	3048.60	3209.00	+42.00	...
L&G Prop S1	102.90	108.40	-0.10	...
Managed	2666.30	2806.70	+23.70	...

The M & G Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Bond Acc	575.90	604.80	...	...
Equity Bond Acc @	7292.90	7657.60	+136.90	...
European Bd Acc	2832.70	2974.50	+47.80	...
Extra Yld Bd Acc	6178.30	6487.40	+83.60	...
Gilt Bond Acc	949.40	997.00	+2.30	...
High Yield Bond @	532.70	559.50	+4.30	...
International Bd	7536.10	7913.00	+220.10	...
Japan Bond Acc	772.50	811.20	-1.40	...
L&G Prop Acc	102.40	107.70	...	...
Managed Bond Acc	4806.30	5046.70	+42.70	...

SAVE & PROSPER INSURANCE AND PENSIONS
St James's House, 27-43 Eastern Road, Romford
RM1 3NH
Customer Helpline:0845 3000144

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Bal Inv Fund	473.30	498.20	-0.50	...
Deposit Fund (2)	719.90	757.80	+0.40	...
Gilt Fund	1504.40	1583.60	+0.60	...
Global Equity Fd	2459.60	2589.10	-35.70	...
Property Fund (46)	254.50	267.90	...	...

SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS
0131 225 2211
19 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YE

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	2839.00	2988.50	-14.20	...
Deposit	348.50	366.90	+0.20	...
European	4057.70	4271.30	+60.00	3.00
Fixed Interest	711.30	748.80	+2.10	...
Global Mgd	2225.60	2342.80	-32.50	...
Index Linked	638.40	672.10	-0.10	...
Managed	1723.80	1814.60	-20.60	...
Pacific	1953.20	2056.10	-10.60	...
Property	845.60	890.20	+3.20	...
UK Equity	2448.20	2577.10	+45.30	...
Worldwide	696.30	733.00	-0.20	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE
0141 248 6321
301 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5HN

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Fund	313.30	329.80	+0.10	...
European Fund	3117.60	3281.70	+4.20	...
Gilts & Fxd Int	517.10	544.30	+2.70	...
Growth Fund	1145.20	1205.50	-3.90	...
International Fd	1926.00	2027.30	-27.40	...
North American	3625.80	3816.70	-11.30	...
Opportunity Fd	1206.80	1270.30	-6.80	...
Safety Fund	682.60	718.50	+0.60	...
UK Equity	1455.60	1532.20	+26.00	...

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION
0131 556 9181
6 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YA

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	332.40	349.90	+0.10	...
Equity	1270.00	1336.80	+18.00	...
Fixed Interest	703.90	740.90	+3.30	...
Index Linked	458.20	482.30	+1.60	...
International	1595.60	1679.60	-23.60	...
Managed	1173.20	1234.90	-4.40	...
Property	571.60	601.70	+1.40	...

Formerly Prolific

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Adventurous Mg	1219.10	1283.30	-6.70	...
Bal Gwth Mngd	3545.90	3732.60	-14.50	...
Cash Fund	602.50	634.30	+0.20	...
Cautious Mngd	425.10	447.50	+0.20	...
Equity Fund	5595.60	5890.20	-75.50	...
Equity Inc Dist	189.10	199.10	+3.00	6.45
European	1209.80	1273.50	+1.60	...
Extra Income Fd	1817.90	1913.60	+23.70	...
Far East	2909.30	3062.50	-120.60	...
Fxd Interest Fund	1120.90	1179.90	+5.80	...
High Income	4238.00	4461.10	+73.70	...
International	1926.60	2028.00	-26.30	...
Managed Dist	150.90	158.90	+0.60	6.38
North American	5936.00	6248.50	-18.10	...
Property Fund	855.10	900.20	+2.20	...
Technology	13374.90	14078.90	-981.50	...
UK Mid Cap	4439.10	4672.80	+93.30	...

Henderson Investment Bonds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Fund	408.50	430.00	+0.10	...
European Fund	1984.60	2089.10	+2.60	...
Far East Fund	2858.80	3009.30	-118.50	...
Fixed Interest	54.50	57.40	+0.30	...
Global Managed	2062.60	2171.20	-8.40	...
North America	2673.80	2814.60	-8.10	...
UK Equity Fd	1472.30	1549.80	+32.40	...

SCOTTISH WIDOWS GROUP
PO Box 902, Edinburgh EH16 5BU

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Fund	401.30	422.40	+0.20	...
Equity Fund	3572.10	3760.10	+67.30	...
Fixed Interest Fd	912.60	960.60	+2.60	...
Indexed Stock Fd	588.40	619.40	-1.00	...
International Fd	3576.70	3764.90	-16.60	...
Inv Cash	618.50	651.00	...	...
Inv Pol 1	7942.10	7942.10	...	...
Inv Pol 2	6668.80	7019.80	...	...
Inv Pol 3	5409.00	5693.70	...	...
Mixed Fund	2596.00	2732.60	-7.90	...
Property Fund	1050.80	1106.10	+1.50	...

SKANDIA LIFE ASSURANCE CO LTD
01703 334411
Skandia House, Portland Terrace
Southampton S09 7BX

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Acc	2694.70	2836.50	+54.60	...

STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE LTD
Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road,
Edinburgh EH1 2DH 0131 225 2552

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	469.30	494.00	...	...
Equity	6447.90	6787.30	+108.90	0.36
European	1355.60	1427.00	+3.30	0.52
Far East	741.00	780.00	-30.30	1.16
Fixed Interest	1062.20	1118.20	+3.20	0.01
Index Linked	549.10	578.00	-1.40	0.38
International	4050.60	4263.80	-42.30	...
Managed	3977.10	4186.50	-0.20	0.36
Nth American	1565.60	1648.10	-5.50	...
Property	808.50	851.10	+1.70	...

Pensions (Series 4)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	152.90	152.90	+0.10	...
Equity	377.50	377.50	+7.60	...
European	433.10	433.10	+1.30	...
Far East	421.80	421.80	-20.40	...
Fixed Interest	232.60	232.60	+1.30	...
Index Linked	197.60	197.60	-0.50	...
International	556.40	556.40	-5.30	...
Managed	390.80	390.80	-0.40	...
Nth American	673.60	673.60	-6.80	...
Property	282.90	282.90	+0.30	...
Stock Exchange	554.40	554.40	-2.30	...

TESCO PERSONEL FINANCIAL LIFE LTD
0845 5555
PO Box 23042, Edinburgh EH3 8YG

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Growth	396.10	396.10	+2.50	...
Intl Growth	727.60	727.60	+0.80	...
UK Growth	430.90	430.90	+9.90	...

WINDSOR LIFE ASSUR CO LTD
01952 292929
Windsor House, Telford, Shropshire
Formerly AEtna
1982 Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Deposit	374.90	394.60	+0.20	...
Far East Equity	2776.20	2922.30	-164.50	...
Fixed	666.00	701.10	+3.50	...
Index-Linked Fd	596.60	628.00	+2.10	...
Managed	2046.60	2154.30	-4.20	...
N Amer Equity	3750.70	3948.10	-12.10	...
Property	547.60	576.40	+0.30	...
Special Opp	2915.30	3068.80	-30.10	...
UK Equity	2373.40	2498.40	+33.60	...

Formerly AEGON Life

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced	2853.90	3020.00	-5.90	...
Fixed Interest	617.60	653.60	+3.20	...
International	3766.10	3985.30	-42.90	...
Money	452.10	478.40	+0.20	...
Property	1379.40	1459.70	+0.80	...
UK Equity	3927.00	4155.60	+55.70	...

Formerly Crown

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Life Equity Acc	6035.10	6352.80	+85.80	...
Life Fxd Int Acc	772.00	812.60	+4.10	...
Life High Inc Acc	4925.40	5184.60	+72.70	...
Life Intl Acc	4609.10	4851.70	-52.40	...
Life Inv Tst Acc	4993.20	5256.00	-10.30	...
Life Managed Acc	3584.30	3772.90	-7.50	...
Life Money Acc	540.20	568.70	+0.20	...
Life Property Acc	802.00	844.20	+0.50	...

Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Bear	77.78	81.87	+0.78	...
Bull	102.40	107.80	-0.20	...
Deposit	24.75	26.06	+0.01	...
Gilt Edged	36.05	37.95	+0.19	...
Owl	129.00	135.70	+1.80	...
Squirrel	32.73	34.45	+0.02	...
Stag	130.10	136.90	-1.30	...

Pensions

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Bear	136.20	143.40	+1.60	...
Bull	166.90	175.60	-0.40	...
Deposit	40.12	42.23	+0.02	...
Gilt Edged	57.51	60.54	+0.37	...
Owl	206.30	217.20	+3.20	...
Squirrel	53.63	56.45	+0.03	...
Stag	224.50	236.30	-2.80	...

Pre 1982 Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
3-Way Fund	4179.60	4179.60	-8.50	...

Gresham

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American & Genrl	7548.40	7945.60	-24.00	...
Capital Fund	3715.00	3910.50	+52.70	...
Equity Fund	4232.00	4454.80	+60.00	...
Fixed Interest	626.00	659.00	+3.30	...
Income	4942.50	5202.60	+70.10	...
International Gth	6074.90	6394.70	-69.30	...
Japan & General	891.60	938.50	-22.10	...
Managed Bond	4577.90	4818.80	-9.40	...
Money Fund	581.10	611.70	+0.20	...
Property Fund	1285.30	1352.90	+0.80	...
Recovery Fund	3877.20	4081.30	-39.90	...

WINTERTHUR LIFE UK LTD
01256 470707
Winterthur Way, Basingstoke,RG21 6SZ
Formerly Colonial

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Inv Pens	13869.40	14599.30	+413.30	...
Equity Pens Cap	3119.80	3284.00	+90.90	...
Key ‡	605.50	...	+2.90	...
Managed	1757.70	1850.20	+8.80	...
Mngd Inv Pens	4962.90	5224.10	+33.50	...
Mngd Pens Cap	1118.60	1177.50	+6.80	...
Pacemaker ‡	1210.30	...	+5.90	...

ZURICH ASSURANCE LTD
0845 300 2332
UK Life Centre,Swindon SN1 1EL
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity	16093.70	16940.70	+47.10	...
Managed (1)	1434.30	1509.80	+9.50	...
Managed (2)	1089.80	1147.20	+7.20	...
Managed (3) ‡	879.00	...	+6.00	...
Mangd Gen 4	203.00	213.70	+1.30	...
Property	2114.10	2225.40	+1.40	...
Property (1)	440.00	463.10	+0.30	...
Property (2) ‡	494.90	...	+0.40	...

Pension

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Managed (1)	2137.90	2250.40	+17.00	...
Equity Acc	48721.40	51285.60	+177.40	...
Managed Acc	23558.10	24798.00	+190.90	...
Property (1)	853.70	898.60	+0.80	...
Property (2) ‡	937.60	...	+1.00	...
Property Acc	10260.80	10800.80	+10.10	...
With Profs (5) ‡	268.20	...	+0.20	...
With Profs (6) ‡	235.60	...	+0.10	...

Share Class 1 Retail

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Managed (2) ‡	1154.00	...	+9.40	...

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 1/8% 50	63.66	+ .02	0.79	2.56
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 1/4% 52	56.85	+ .08	0.44	2.55
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 1/8% 28	99.36	– .02	0.13	0.44
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 1/8% 29	98.24	– .03	0.13	0.80
98.49	94.73	Tr IL 0 1/8% 31	95.46	+ .06	0.13	1.06
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 1/8% 36	83.27	+ .01	0.15	1.92
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 1/8% 39	77.11	+ .08	0.16	2.21
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 1/8% 41	72.44	+ .07	0.17	2.31
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 1/8% 44	66.63	+ .14	0.19	2.47
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 1/8% 46	63.00	+ .04	0.20	2.53
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 1/8% 48	59.31	– .03	0.21	2.55
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 1/8% 56	50.03	+ .02	0.25	2.48
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 1/8% 58	49.04	+ .15	0.25	2.45
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 1/8% 65	43.72	+ .14	0.29	2.31
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 1/8% 68	42.64	+ .20	0.29	2.26
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 1/8% 73	43.86	+ .28	0.28	1.97
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 3/4% 34	93.63	+ .06	0.80	1.64
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 3/4% 47	70.92	+ .03	1.06	2.52
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 3/8% 62	51.77	+ .22	0.72	2.39
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 5/8% 40	80.83	+ .12	0.77	2.27
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 5/8% 42	76.47	+ .07	0.82	2.37
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 1/4% 27	101.20	+ .07	1.24	0.33
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 1/4% 32	99.50	+ .10	1.26	1.33
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 1/4% 54	74.20	+ .09	1.68	2.53
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 1/4% 55	73.74	+ .07	1.70	2.52
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 1/8% 35	94.37	+ .08	1.19	1.80
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 1/8% 37	90.91	+ .06	1.24	2.03
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 3/4% 38	96.21	+ .07	1.82	2.11
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 7/8% 49	88.70	+ .02	2.11	2.52
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	240.25	+ .12	0.83	1.77
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 1/8% 30	341.05	– .30	1.21	0.92

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	22.31	Tr 0 1/2% 61	22.70	– .20	2.20	5.47
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 1/8% 51	55.75	+ .06	0.22	2.56
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 5/8% 50	33.44	– .24	1.87	5.75
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 1/2% 53	41.65	– .28	3.60	5.81
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 1/4% 51	40.32	– .30	3.10	5.80
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 1/8% 73	27.85	– .23	4.04	5.31
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 3/4% 57	42.43	– .29	4.12	5.75
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 5/8% 54	42.48	– .30	3.83	5.78
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 5/8% 71	36.07	– .28	4.51	5.44
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 1/2% 65	50.43	– .34	4.96	5.67
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 1/2% 68	65.58	– .43	5.34	5.65
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 3/4% 52	73.16	– .37	5.13	5.75
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 3/4% 53	72.30	– .37	5.19	5.78
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 1/4% 55	78.76	– .44	5.40	5.76
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	74.40	– .44	5.38	5.73

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 1/4% 31	81.15	– .15	0.31	4.51
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 3/8% 30	84.42	– .14	0.44	4.47
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 5/8% 35	68.60	– .23	0.91	5.00
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 7/8% 33	76.83	– .17	1.14	4.82
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 7/8% 46	43.69	– .27	2.00	5.70
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 1/2% 47	48.71	– .27	3.08	5.74
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 1/4% 41	56.89	– .27	2.20	5.46
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 1/8% 39	62.24	– .27	1.81	5.30
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 3/4% 37	71.23	– .26	2.46	5.19
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 3/4% 49	49.93	– .27	3.50	5.75
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.44	– .16	1.21	4.66
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 1/2% 45	75.51	– .36	4.64	5.65
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 1/4% 33	91.68	– .20	3.54	4.75
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 1/4% 44	73.74	– .34	4.41	5.63
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 3/4% 38	87.11	– .32	4.30	5.26
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 1/2% 34	97.40	– .25	4.62	4.89
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 1/2% 35	96.72	– .27	4.65	4.97
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 1/2% 42	88.90	– .37	5.06	5.54
102.33	97.08	Tr 4 1/4% 32	98.00	– .20	4.34	4.64
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 1/4% 34	95.73	– .26	4.44	4.90
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 1/4% 36	93.87	– .32	4.53	5.06
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 1/4% 39	89.76	– .34	4.73	5.35
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 1/4% 40	88.42	– .34	4.81	5.42
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 1/4% 46	82.89	– .42	5.13	5.68
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 1/4% 49	81.18	– .39	5.24	5.72
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 1/8% 31	98.11	– .20	4.20	4.58
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 1/8% 33	96.42	– .21	4.28	4.76
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 3/4% 30	101.03	– .17	4.70	4.49
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 3/4% 35	97.91	– .31	4.85	5.04
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 3/4% 38	95.18	– .34	4.99	5.29
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 3/8% 30	99.49	– .17	4.40	4.53
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 3/8% 40	90.38	– .34	4.84	5.39
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 5/8% 37	95.63	– .33	4.84	5.17
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 7/8% 36	98.19	– .32	4.96	5.11
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 1/4% 41	98.09	– .39	5.35	5.44
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 3/8% 56	94.56	– .47	5.68	5.76

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 1/2% 29	90.97	– .09	0.55	4.37
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 1/8% 28	94.23	– .04	0.13	4.15
99.37	96.11	Tr 0 3/8% 26	99.29	+ .02	0.38	3.63
91.00	87.88	Tr 0 7/8% 29	89.41	– .13	0.98	4.44
97.31	95.29	Tr 1 1/4% 27	97.23	– ...	1.29	4.25
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 5/8% 28	94.31	– .07	1.72	4.34
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.70	– .14	4.05	4.50
101.41	99.44	Tr 4 1/4% 27	99.95	– .06	4.25	4.28
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 1/8 % 29	98.99	– .14	4.17	4.49
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 1/8% 27	100.03	– .01	4.12	4.02
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 3/8% 28	99.97	– .06	4.38	4.39
107.53	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.73	– .11	5.78	4.31

* maturities as having a 3-month indexation lag and which trade on a real clean price basis, excluding inflation adjustment charge

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

Register

Obituaries

Donald Legget

Famously rude but dedicated rowing coach of several triumphant crews

In Donald Legget's six decades as a rowing coach he achieved legendary status on two counts. He was revered by the many hundreds he taught at Cambridge, Radley College, St Paul's and other clubs and schools. He was also renowned for his extraordinarily rough tongue.

A large, heavy man, he laced his remarks with profanities and racial taunts — most unrepeatable. He gave his charges teasing nicknames: "the bloody Egyptian", the "Turk". He referred to women's rowing as "assisted drifting". Boys from posh public schools were "tuck box", the rest "grammar grub". The French were "the people who nearly lost us two bloody world wars", the Canadians "colonials". He told one young rower: "There's a piece of shit on the end of your oar." When the boy looked at his blade, he added: "No, the other end." He told another: "You couldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding." Biking along a towpath beside a boat, he ran into a walker and asked: "Are you f***ing blind?" The man was.

Some were offended, but not those who knew him. They realised he belonged to an age before political correctness. They understood that he never meant what he said unkindly, and that not being taunted was worse. They knew that behind the bluster was a man who cared deeply for his many protégés: a "Mr Chips" of rowing. They also knew that he was an extraordinarily gifted coach who dedicated his life to the sport he loved.

Legget was never a head coach. He was far too disorganised, and incapable of delivering an inspiring pep talk. He enjoyed a drink or two or three (he liked to insist that his surname was spelt with "two Gs and one T — like the drink"). One former colleague described him as "the only person I know who can single-handedly destroy a brand-new hire car without actually hitting anything. An Amsterdam street disappeared in a vast cloud of billowing blue smoke as the revs went off the counter and the engine summarily blew up."

His great gift was his "eye", his ability instantly to assess a crew's potential, to spot tiny technical flaws in a boat's balance or a rower's stroke, to explain the tweaks that would enhance a crew's rhythm and earn it those precious extra seconds. He was a "tideway guru" who knew the bends and currents of the Boat Race course inside out, and exactly where a cox should steer at any particular point of the river: "Aim for the second lamppost on the left."

His social views may have been outdated, but he kept up with all the latest rowing technology to gain a few more seconds through better materials or telemetry. During the Cold War, when East Germany was a force to be reckoned with, he taught himself rudimentary German so he could read its rowing magazines and garner its secrets. He also had an encyclopaedic knowledge of rowing. "Nostalgia comes easily to a man who has spent his life teaching people to go backwards," Patrick Kidd once wrote in The Times.

Legget's reward lay less in his rowers' many triumphs at the Olympics, the Boat Race, the Henley Royal Regatta and countless other races around the world; it lay in the sheer joy of the sport, the individuals he inspired and the lasting friendships he made.

On several occasions Legget's lack of restraint got him into 'scrapes'

All his life he suffered from depression. Rowing was how he coped. "You've got to fight your way out of bed in the morning and do something and have a purpose in life," he told a New Zealand radio station. "The huge purpose I have is coaching rowing."

Donald Ferguson Legget was born in Heswall on the Wirral in 1942, the oldest of three children of Donald and Winifred Legget. His father ran a company that painted refineries, bridges and large industrial structures. From Mostyn House, a now-defunct prep school in Cheshire, he won an exhibition to Radley, where he fell in love with rowing and became head of boats.

A second exhibition took him to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, to read classics, though he was thrown off the course because he was preoccupied with rowing. The law department took him on instead, and he became a member of the light blue Cambridge crews that lost the Boat Race in 1963 and won it in 1964. In the second of those races he was dubbed "HBE", Heaviest Bow Ever.

After graduating he became a less than enthusiastic articled clerk with the law firm Allen & Overy, and captained the venerable Leander rowing club. But he had a breakdown, underwent experimental electro-convulsive therapy and suffered from depression for the rest of his life. After a year of "moping around", he returned to Mostyn House as a classics teacher, but did not enjoy that either.

Salvation came in 1968 when he was invited to join Cambridge University Boat Club's coaching team. He remained there for 58 years while simultaneously coaching at various schools. Coaches in those days were unpaid, so Legget made ends meet by selling sports clothing to schools. A lifelong bachelor, he lived frugally and somewhat chaotically in a flat in Weybridge, Surrey, where he also sang in a male voice choir. Extraordinarily, a photo of him in cap and scarf featured in *The Official Sloane Ranger Diary* of 1983 with the caption "Modelling the Boat Race style".

In 1996, in addition to coaching at Cambridge, he was invited to join the coaching team at Radley, his alma mater. The warden, or headmaster, aware of his reputation, stipulated that he should pay a £5 penalty every time he swore. During his years there Radley enjoyed unprecedented success, winning three national titles and the prestigious Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup at Henley. But on several occasions his lack of verbal restraint got him into what colleagues described as "scrapes", and he was let go after falling out with a new head coach. He was deeply hurt.

One Radley parent was so outraged that he funded Legget's stipend for two years when he was subsequently taken on by St Paul's School in London as a part-time coach. He did so in the hope that St Paul's would beat Radley, and it did. Indeed, with Legget's help, St Paul's won the Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup four times in ten years and produced one of the fastest school crews ever.

But again there were "scrapes". Legget once dismissed the Barnes Bridge Ladies Rowing Club, the organisers of the Pairs Head of the River race on the Thames, as "bloody useless". The ladies threatened to ban St Paul's from future races until he apologised.

Legget remained an adviser to St Paul's until last year, by which time he was 83, having difficulty getting in and out of a launch and occasionally falling asleep in mid-river. Even then he continued coaching at Great Marlow School in Buckinghamshire, but he fell off his electric bike during a training session, broke his hip and never really recovered.

GILLY PHOTOGRAPHY/THE BOAT RACE

Legget watching last year's Boat Race, which was won by his Cambridge team

Donald Ferguson Legget, rowing coach, was born on June 16, 1942. He died on July 9, 2026, aged 84

Dang Van Phuoc

War photographer who risked his life and lost an eye to 'speak to the world' through his pictures

In a decade on the front line as a photojournalist during the Vietnam War, Dang Van Phuoc took a portfolio of extraordinary pictures that unflinchingly captured the bravery, fear, pity and the terrible human cost of war. It cost him his right eye in a grenade explosion but his vision to tell the world the truth about the carnage taking place in the jungles and paddy fields of southeast Asia remained undimmed.

There was his image of a US soldier stooping to help a fragile elderly woman resettle in a refugee camp and his picture of wounded and terrified-looking Vietcong prisoners, waiting to be sent to an interrogation centre. Then there was the scene he captured in the Ho Bo Woods, north of Saigon, as soldiers took cover in a crater left by a B-52 bomber and his picture of a South Vietnamese marine holding a knife to the throat of a suspected guerrilla. Or the shot of a US soldier tossing a rice basket into the flames after a peasant woman had retrieved it from her burning house in the background.

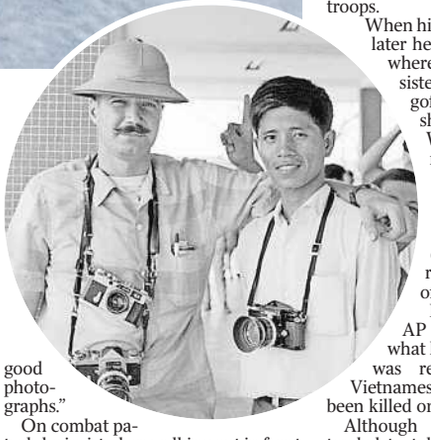
Perhaps most harrowing of all was his image of a Vietnamese woman carrying the lifeless body of her six-month-old baby, his burnt head resting on her left shoulder. They had been hiding in the family bunker when US aircraft dropped napalm on their village, which was suspected of harbouring enemy positions.

Through such images he found a voice "to speak to the world", he said. "The picture can tell more than I do. I am like small sand in the beach," he noted self-effacingly in an oral history interview in 2012 for the Associated Press, for whom he worked from 1965 until the end of the war.

Horst Faas, who was his boss as AP's Saigon bureau chief and won a Pulitzer

'We built up a great friendship first'
Marriages and engagements
Page 68

DANG VAN PHUOC/AP



A photograph by Dang of a US soldier carrying a wounded Vietnamese ranger, 1968; far right, Dang with the photojournalist Eddie Adams in 1966

prize for his own combat pictures, referred to Dang as "our secret weapon". The reason was simple: "The idea doesn't bother him that he gets injured. He wants to take pictures."

Dang's dedication to the job cost him not only an eye but other injuries too, and he was wounded at least five times in his ten years on the front line. He took shrapnel in a leg and in his chest from a grenade explosion and on another occasion his helmet somehow saved him from nothing worse than concussion when he was hit in the head by a rocket. Yet he remained undaunted and always returned to the fray.

"He was always willing to go the extra mile for a good picture, which meant putting his life on the line," according to David Hume Kennerly, a Pulitzer-winning photographer for United Press International who worked alongside him during the war. "Any of us out there had various degrees of insanity or courage. It was a close line between the two. He wasn't nuts. He didn't take what I'd say were unnecessary chances, but he deliberately took what it required to get good photographs."

On combat patrols he insisted on walking out in front with the "point man", excellently positioned to get his photographs but also exposing him to the maximum danger. His bravery under fire was officially recognised when in 1968 he received a commendation from the US army's 9th Infantry Division for carrying a wounded American soldier on his back through sniper fire. He was credited with having saved his life.

After losing an eye in 1969, he wore a patch and described his only problem as trying to watch for silent hand gestures from the soldiers with whom he was patrolling to indicate imminent danger while he was looking through the lens of his camera with his one remaining eye. "For Phuoc, happiness is a flak vest and a helmet on which he has inscribed all the battles he has covered," the celebrated war correspondent Peter Arnett wrote in AP's staff magazine at the time.

He stayed on the front line until the fall of Saigon in 1975 when he was airlifted with his wife and two children to a refugee camp in Guam with little more than the clothes on their back — and, of course, his camera. With the help of the AP reporter Linda Deutsch, who was covering the tent city where the refugees were housed, Dang and his family were eventually flown to the Camp Pendleton Marine base in California.

AP kept him on as a staff photographer and posted him to Hong Kong for a while before he returned to the United States. On leaving the agency he settled in Orange County, California, home to "Little Saigon", the world's largest community of Vietnamese residents outside Vietnam.

He lived there for the rest of his life, worked as a portrait photographer, and as a founding member of The Artistic Photography Association helped to train young photographers. Dang was also a civilian volunteer for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. He is survived by his wife, Hoa Thi Pham, and a daughter, Diem-Trang Phuoc Dang.

After Saigon fell, he was airlifted with little more than what he was wearing

Dang Van Phuoc was born in 1935, in a village south of Da Nang, on the southern central coast of what was then French-Indo China. The youngest of numerous siblings, when he was ten he saw his father, who was the chief of the village, buried alive in sand and beheaded by Ho Chi Minh's insurgent troops.

When his mother died a few years later he made his way to Saigon where he lived with one of his sisters and volunteered as a gofer at a film studio where she worked as a cook. While humping equipment and sweeping the floor, he took the opportunity to learn about photography, and taught himself how to develop film in a dark room and the other tricks of the trade.

Hired by Faas to work for AP in 1965, he knew exactly what he was getting into for he was replacing another local Vietnamese photographer who had been killed on assignment.

Although foreign correspondents tended to take much of the glory in the coverage of the Vietnam War, with his local knowledge Dang provided essential access and cultural understanding, adding depth and immediacy to AP's reporting.

What he shared with all of the greatest war correspondents and photojournalists was his belief that documenting history was a mission that had to be fulfilled whatever the personal risk.

Dang Van Phuoc, photographer, was born on October 2, 1935. He died on May 23, 2026, aged 90

Franco Baresi

Diminutive Italian World Cup-winning defender

When the teenage Franco Baresi first entered AC Milan's training ground in Italy he was so tiny that he was stopped by security guards and asked if he was a ball boy, or even seeking his father. His team-mates, when he was pointed in the right direction, thought he was a ghostly figure because he never spoke. He would just nod his head or point a finger. The reaction from opponents was still more critical.

When he broke into the club's first team, the opposition would laugh because of his size, 5ft 9in, in an era when height was still considered a prerequisite for central defenders. That was before he outjumped, outmanoeuvred and outstared everyone on the pitch. His team-mates swiftly appreciated that he did not need to talk because one terrifying look was sufficient to make opposing forwards melt away. Baresi was to become synonymous with AC Milan and with elevating the arts of defensive football.

Indeed, Brian Glanville, the Sunday Times football correspondent believed Baresi redefined the role of "libero", the sweeper, with elegance, composure and vision rather than raw aggression. He lauded him as "a sublime compound of almost every talent", capturing technical ability and intelligence. He and team-mates such as Paolo Maldini, Alessandro Costacurta and Mauro Tassotti perfected the offside trap.

This was a feature of the club's 58-match unbeaten run in Serie A from 1991-93, under Fabio Capello, who went on to manage England. The team was known as "Gli Invincibili", the Invincibles. Baresi stayed with AC Milan for 20 years, winning six Serie A titles and three European Cups/Champions Leagues, becoming captain at the age of 22 and remaining so until his retirement 15 seasons later. At the end of his career the club decided his No 6 shirt would not be worn by anyone else. This was the first time in AC Milan's history that such an honour had been bestowed.

Baresi was a member of Italy's 1982 World Cup-winning squad without making an appearance. He was not selected for the tournament in 1986 and captained the team in 1990 which finished in third place and in 1994 which reached the final, culminating in a penalty shoot-out defeat by Brazil. He was among the players who failed to score. He was by then 34 and managed to play despite having surgery only 25 days earlier after tearing his meniscus.

Franchino Baresi was born in 1960 and grew up on a farmstead in Travagliato, an hour's drive from Milan, the son of Terzo and Regina Baresi, both of whom died when he was young. Franco's brother, Giuseppe, who was two years older, was also a promising defender and soon became attached to Inter Milan, crosstown rivals to AC Milan. It was hoped that Franco, as he became known, would follow him there. He was offered a trial when he was 14, but was deemed too small.

So Franco was taken on by AC Milan instead. "Franco's assessor got it all wrong," wrote Gabriele Marcotti in his biography of Capello, who both played for, and managed, AC Milan. "His elder brother, 'Beppe', became a very good footballer and an international, but Franco went on to be a legend, amassing 716 appearances with AC Milan (with 31 goals) and 81 with Italy. And since then the fans have been delighted in rubbing Inter noses in this very fact."

The role that the younger Baresi near-perfected was known in the English game as "the sweeper" but was more sophisticated. Initially, the libero was only seen as extra defensive cover, a position to provide clearances. As the role developed, it encompassed surges into midfield and intelligent passes to the feet of forwards. Dribbles by the likes of Baresi, which were to become common among centre backs, would break the line of the opposition's pressing and lure them towards the ball so as to create space for team-mates in advanced positions.

Baresi's expertise led to his inclusion in Fifa's "all-star team" in the World Cup of 1990, even though Italy did not reach the final. He was to become the first footballer to be a member of squads that finished in first, second and third places in the tournament. In retirement from the game he became vice-president of AC Milan, coached their youth teams and was appointed Fulham's director of football in 2002. He remained in the role for three months, resigning after a reported power struggle with the manager, Jean Tigana. This year he was one of the torchbearers at the opening ceremony for the Milano Cortina Winter Olympics.

Baresi is survived by his wife, Maura Lari, whom he married in 1984. Many years later he disclosed how they had met. "Maura served at the tables of the Piccolo Alleluja restaurant in Montevarchi. She was the owner's daughter. The Milan masseur, Paolo Mariconti, noticed that I was staring raptly at that beautiful blonde girl. And then he said, 'Miss, please serve him first, because he's the captain'. I blushed. But since then, every year we celebrate the day we got married." They had two children, Edoardo and Gianandrea, the latter adopted after being born in Russia.

Baresi's nickname as a youth player was "Piscinin", a Milanese dialect word that roughly translates as "little guy". As with the initial attitudes towards him, that changed. He picked up a new nickname, one that had been bestowed on another footballer, Franz Beckenbauer of West Germany. Baresi became known as "Kaiser Franz".

Franco Baresi, footballer, was born on May 8, 1960. He died, after pulmonary surgery, on July 31, 2026, aged 66

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Readers' lives

Marriages and engagements

'We built up a great friendship first'

Alex Palin, 34, a duty manager at Abergele Leisure Centre, and **Steven Lester**, 39, a new business manager for Holiday Cottages, were married on May 26, 2026, at Delamere Manor in Cuddington, Cheshire

JOE BICKERTON

Alex and Steve invited 71 guests to the ceremony at Delamere Manor, the former home of Gary Barlow of Take That

Alex and Steve were work colleagues for eight years before becoming a couple. The backdrop was Abergele Leisure Centre in north Wales. "We built up a really great friendship that is the bedrock to how great we are together now," he says.

Alex was 16 when she started working as a lifeguard after school. Steve was a duty manager. He is five years older and had studied sports development at a local college.

The couple enjoy a silly sense of humour and some "gentle ribbing". "We just understand each other," he says. "We don't take anything seriously, unless we need to be serious. Life has to be fun."

Steve had a son, Noah, who was born in 2013, from a previous relationship. Alex got to know Noah when Steve brought him to the leisure centre. Steve had his own flat. Alex, whose parents separated when she was three, was then living with her mother in Abergele. She and Steve were both in relationships. "We were a shoulder for each other through relationships and would give one another advice," she says.

In 2014 Alex worked at Camp America in Atlanta. She spent the following year in Australia and New Zealand, and in 2016 went to Thailand. She kept in contact with Steve via texts. "I felt myself missing her more than just missing a friend," he says. When she was unwell in Thailand, he was her main contact. On her return to Wales, she would visit him as he recovered from a nose operation after years playing rugby.

They went on their first date to Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market in 2016. The following May, they moved into a rented bungalow. "It was like two mates living together," she says. Noah was Steve's priority. "To come into a relationship like that is a big step," he says. "Alex took to parenting like it was completely natural." Their son, Archie, was born in 2020.

The couple lived with Alex's mother for a year before moving into a new build. "Steve is a lot more laid-back," she says. "I'm a bit of a panicker and a worrier. He will take charge of the situation. He is so calming and reassuring, and makes me feel loved and safe. I love his sense of humour and the way he makes me laugh every day. It makes me feel so happy." She is

now a duty manager at the leisure centre. Steve left in 2018 and now works as a new business manager for Holiday Cottages.

"Alex is the most selfless person I've ever met," says Steve. "She's the first person I want to share good and bad news with; the first person I want to celebrate with and spend time with; the person I choose first for every event life brings us."

He had always wanted to be married. "It's an outward commitment to show how much this person means to you," he says. He felt ready to propose after hearing Elton John's *Are You Ready for Love* on the car radio on his drive to work, and booked dinner at The Shard in London in April 2022. Alex thought they were there to celebrate her 30th birthday until he went down on one knee with a ring.

Alex and Steve wanted another child and delayed marriage until their daughter, Phoebe, now three, was old enough to be their flower girl. She came with them to look around Delamere Manor, a wedding and events venue set in more than 100 acres of countryside in Cheshire.

It is the former home of Gary Barlow, the lead singer of Take That. They invited 71 guests to the midday ceremony. Last year they did a house swap with Alex's mother, so Alex is now raising her family in her childhood home. Steve's mother, Rose, died last February. "We've had to really support each other," he says.

On the eve of the wedding, Alex stayed at a hotel with her bridal party. She wore a dress that she had seen at a local bridal boutique, but felt was too expensive, and tracked it down online and paid £400 on Vinted. She walked into the ceremony to an instrumental version of Ruelle's *I Get to Love You* with her "Uncle" Ron, her mother's first husband before she married her father, who is still a close friend. She had four bridesmaids whose daughters were her four flower girls.

It was a record-breaking hot day and, after a sit-down meal, there were cupcakes made by a family friend that needed consuming before they melted. Another 29 guests arrived for the evening celebrations and sang along during the newlyweds' first dance to the Goo Goo Dolls' *Iris*. Their children joined them on the dancefloor.

Alex and Steve went to London on honeymoon, returning to The Shard for a meal and to see the musical *Wicked*. For Alex, being married is the "final piece of the jigsaw". Until then, she had a different surname from the rest of the family. "I feel part of the team," she says.

New reader

Theadora Hazel Maynard was born on June 7, 2026, at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford to **Suzanne**, 35, and **Will Maynard**, 37

When Suzanne, Will and baby Thea arrived home at 9am on June 7, Cleo, their eldest, was up and ready.

Suzanne expected her to be a little confused or jealous at the arrival of the new baby — Cleo is strong-willed — but the opposite transpired: when Suzanne walked in to say good morning, Cleo, who is two, replied: "Where's little sister? Where's baby?"

"As soon as she saw Thea she wanted to hold her," says Suzanne. "She was really gentle."

That first night, however, was sleepless and hot, and Cleo's tolerance of Thea's crying quickly turned from "It's OK, baby, stop crying" to shouting "SHUT UPPPPP" from her room next door.

Tensions have cooled since. Cleo tells everyone about her baby sister, and has conjured up the combined name of "Cleodora" which she chants with her nursery friends when Suzanne picks her up. Cleo gives Thea little pats on the chest and impromptu kisses; she likes to tell her stories and makes sure she can see the book at bedtime.

Though Cleo was born by IVF, Thea was conceived naturally, "a wonderful turn of events", says Suzanne.

Calling her Theadora was a last-minute decision — Suzanne had always liked the name after she had a friend at school with the name — but Suzanne and Will later realised that the Greek spelling of the name means "gift of God".

They aren't religious, but feel that her birth — natural as it was — was a gift. They just hope she doesn't think she's God's gift.

If you would like to feature a wedding or engagement or the birth of a child on these pages, call 020 7782 5583, Mon-Fri, to discuss the content and cost, or email: readerslives@thetimes.co.uk

thetimes.co.uk/static/terms-and-conditions

Readers' Lives
Remembering loved ones

Commemorate the life of a friend or relative in Readers' Lives, a service in contracted tributes

50% discount for subscribers

Call 020 7782 5583 or email readerslives@thetimes.co.uk

Narainduth Sookhoo
Plain-speaking Mauritian commentator and attaché

Narainduth Sookhoo, who died aged 79, appeared in The Times on Saturday March 1, 2025

THE TIMES

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: **newsukadvertising.co.uk** for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

'THE LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.' Zephaniah 3.17 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

CHATTERTON-JILLINGS on 9th June 2026 to Kate Jillings and Henry Chatterton, twins, Nora Georgina and Tala Ann, at University College Hospital, London. Gorgeous girls, first grandchildren for David and Jackie Jillings, Roger and Arlene Chatterton.

DAR on 29th July 2026 to Nina (née Massey) and Habib, a daughter, Ellia Billi Dar.

GRAHAM on 20th July 2026 to Larisa (née L'vov-Basirov) and Robert, a daughter, Honor Petronella Rosemary, sister to Alexandra.

OTTEWILL on 20th July 2026 to Georgia (née Bishop) and Billy, a son, Alfie Steven James, a first grandson for Cecilia and Steven and a first grandchild for Amanda and Matt.

PARKER-PARFITT on 23rd July 2026 to Hannah (née Parfitt) and Frederick Parker, a son, Wilfred Anthony Parker-Parfitt, weighing 8lb 10oz.

ROBERTSON on 17th July 2026 to Helen Wyld and Calum Robertson, a son, Aeneas Hugh Alexander, at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

WEEKES
On 16th July 2026 to Rebecca (née Hennell-Smith) and Edward, a son, Frederick Huw, brother to Matilda and another much-loved grandchild for Sheena and Andy and Alex and Robert.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR T. D. RAWLINSON AND MISS M. H. FORD
The engagement is announced between Timothy, elder son of Richard and Sharon Rawlinson of Fulham, London, and Martha, only daughter of Stephen and Charlotte Ford of Canterbury, Kent.

MR T. P. CAMPBELL AND MS H. C. REEKIE
The engagement is announced between Tancred, son of Rose and Jamie Campbell of Dorset, and Honor, daughter of Caroline Reekie of Suffolk and Jonathan Reekie of London.

MR A. J. R. MACDONALD AND MISS S. SHEPHERD
The engagement is announced between Archie, only son of Alastair and Clare Macdonald of Fowey, Cornwall, and Sophie, elder daughter of Richard and Helen Shepherd of Wantage, Oxfordshire.

MR O. J. COOPER AND MISS S. A. R. STANISTREET
The engagement is announced between Oliver, son of Mr and Mrs Giles Cooper of Basingstoke, Hampshire, and Sophie, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Stanistreet of Howsham, North Yorkshire.

Marriages

MR M. J. FOY AND MS M. M. KARBOWSKA
The marriage took place on 25th July 2026, at Morden Park House, between Matthew James Foy and Marta Maria Karbowska, the eldest son of Judith and Peter Foy of Wimbledon, and the eldest daughter of Izabela and Dariusz Karbowski of Warsaw, Poland.

Deaths

BARBOUR Fiona Margaret, passed away on 29th June 2026, aged 89, in Kimberley, South Africa. A respected ethnologist, military historian and prominent member of the Kimberley community, she is deeply missed by friends and family. Memorial 10th August in Kimberley and livestreamed — email alitowle@hotmail.com

FREI Erika (née Strater) died peacefully on 24th July 2026, aged 99, at St Teresa's Care Home (SW7 3PW). Much-loved mother of Caroline (dec'd), Nicola and Michael; wonderful grandmother to Emma. "Unable are the loved to die/For love is immortality".

GREENROD Peter Edward died 26th July 2026. Much-loved husband of Kate and loving father to Claire, Michael, Jamie and five grandchildren. Funeral service on Tuesday 25th August at midday at The Sacred Heart and St Aldhelm, Sherborne, DT9 3EL.

GRIFFITHS Michael John passed away peacefully on 23rd July 2026, aged 91. Beloved and devoted husband first to Jenny and then Penny. Loving father to Sara, Jeremy, Andrew, Rosi and Biba. Adored grandfather to nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by family, friends and all who knew him. Celebration of life to be held on 19th August in Wiltshire. For funeral details contact Clarkson's Funeral Directors, 01225 426822.

HIRST Jennifer, of Halifax, West Riding, peacefully at home on 18th July 2026, aged 90. Loved by hundreds adored by many. Requiem Mass at St Joseph's Church, Brighouse, on Friday 14th August 2026 at 2pm followed by interment at Brighouse Cemetery. Family flowers only please but donations would be much appreciated to Overgate Hospice c/o BJ Melia & Sons, 64 Gibbet St, Halifax, HX1 5BP. Will friends please accept this as the only intimation and meet at the church. RIP.

LYNE
Dennis Harold Winston died peacefully on 22nd July 2026, aged 83. Dearly loved husband, father and grandfather. He will be greatly missed by all whose lives he touched. Funeral Medmenham Church, 20th August at 11.30am. Tributes can be found online at dennis-lyne.muchloved.com/

The simple way to place your Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register. Available 24 hours a day. Go to: **newsukadvertising.co.uk**

MCKAY-SMITH The Rev Elspeth, minister of Strathbogie Drumblade Church, Huntly, peacefully at home on Saturday 25th July 2026, aged 59. Beloved wife of David, much-loved mother of William, dearly loved daughter of Bill and Margaret, dear sister of Catriona. She will be greatly missed by all her family and friends. Funeral service in Strathbogie Drumblade Church, Bogie Street, Huntly, AB54 8DX, on Friday, 7th August, at 11.30am, thereafter to St Margaret's Churchyard, Forgue, to which all will be made most welcome. Family flowers only please, but donations in lieu, if desired, in aid of Strathbogie Drumblade Church and Clan Cancer Support, at the church door.

MCNALLY Patrick Sean died peacefully at home on Wednesday 22nd July 2026. Much-loved father and grandfather. Private funeral. No flowers please.

PERKINS Professor M John on 24th July 2026, aged 89. Father of Inger, Georgina and Alexandra, widower of Pauline and husband of Rona. Richardsons Funeral Directors in Penrith have details of the ceremony at 3pm on 3rd August at Eden Valley Crematorium.

RICHARDSON
Paul Winston George Richardson, born in Milan, Italy, on 9th December, 1957. Paul Richardson was the son of George Richardson and Joyce Richardson. He grew up in Berkshire, England, and graduated from the University of East Anglia with honours in economics and computing. Paul passed away unexpectedly on 22nd June, 2026, aged 68.

Paul joined WPP as director of treasury in 1992, after six years at Hanson Trust. Joining amid a period of significant restructuring, he played an integral role in positioning WPP as the world's largest advertising and communications company, earning the FTSE 100 Finance Director of the Year Award in 2007. Although he took great pride in his professional accomplishments, the relationships he formed throughout his career were among those he valued most.

Paul was loyal, caring and unshakeably joyful. He was an avid supporter of Ipswich Town Football Club and a Jaguar E-Type enthusiast. Paul spent his mornings driving through empty city streets and his evenings watching detective programmes set in the Italian countryside. Those closest to him will remember his affinity for Sunday breakfasts, his weakness for sweets, and his tendency to be formally dressed regardless of the occasion.

Above all, Paul was deeply devoted to his family. He is survived by his wife, Joy; his children, Brandon, Douglas, Joella and Christianne; and his two grandchildren. Paul will be remembered as a strong leader, a loving father and a devoted husband. Though his time with us feels far too short, his legacy will endure through his family, friendships and the countless people fortunate enough to have known him.

SANTAMARIA The Honourable Joseph Gerard on 23rd July 2026, aged 78. Beloved husband of Soonie, passed away peacefully at home in Melbourne, Australia. Dearly loved father of Jerome, Benedict, John-Paul, Clare and Helen, and loving father-in-law of Alexine, Skye and David. Iconic grandfather of George (dec'd), Henry, Ivo, Edmund, Florence (dec'd), Olive, Jack, Romilly and Catherine. Much-loved son of Bartholomew (dec'd) and Helen (dec'd). Devoted brother of Cristina, Mary Helen, Catherine (dec'd), Bernadette, Bobby, Anne and Paul, and brother-in-law of Barry (dec'd), Terry, Madeleine, Tony, Maree, Alex and John, Michael and Min, Margaret-Mary, James and Penny, Philip and Emma, John, Catherine and Andy. Beloved uncle of many, great-uncle and great friend to more.

STOREY Virginia Anne (née Cayley), aged 90, on 24th July 2026, after a long and so bravely endured decline from cancer, with blue eyes and the seraphic smile. Sister to six, wife to me, mother to three, grandmother to nine, great-grandmother to two, aunt to many, great-aunt to more, godmother to a special few, and beloved by all the many who knew her, Richard. Funeral to be held at All Saints' Church, Settrington, YO17 8NP, on Monday 24th August at 12.30pm. All very welcome. Inquiries to Adam Collier Funeral Services, Pickering, 01751 477766.

WALLOP The Honourable Nicholas Valoynes Bermingham, died peacefully at home, aged 80, on 27th July. Beloved husband of Lavinia, loving father of Victoria and Harry and fond grandfather to his seven grandchildren. Funeral at 11am on Monday 17th August 2026 at Chelsea Old Church followed by a private family committal. No flowers please.

WATSON Robert Frederick Bonner on Friday 24th July. Beloved husband, father, and grandfather. Funeral at All Saints Church, Baschurch, SY4 2EF, on Tuesday 11th August at midday.

WEST Mark "Wuss" died peacefully on 27th July 2026, aged 69, with his family by his side. Loving husband to Deborah, devoted father to Sonja, Sam, Josh and Grace, and a proud grandad to Stephanie and William. There will be a private family funeral.

In Memoriam – Private

DESA Braz Joseph. In loving memory of our father and grandfather on the tenth anniversary of his death on 27th July 2016, aged 81. Much loved by family and friends worldwide, forever in our hearts.

Court Circular

St James's Palace
31st July, 2026
The Duke of Edinburgh, Vice-Patron, Commonwealth Sport, and The Duchess of Edinburgh today attended the XXIII Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

His Royal Highness, Patron, and Her Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Reception given by the British Paralympic Association at Team House for Team Wales, YOTEL Glasgow, 260 Argyle Street, Westergate, Glasgow.

Kensington Palace
31st July, 2026
The Duke of Kent, President, this afternoon received Volunteer Beach Lifeguards from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution to mark International Lifeguard Appreciation Day and the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Charity's Beach Lifeguard Service.

Legal Notices

CR-2026-004359
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES COMPANIES COURT (ChD) IN THE MATTER OF HARDIDE PLC and IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

Notice is hereby given that a Part 8 claim form of Hardide plc (company number 05344714) (the Company) was issued at the High Court of Justice on 28 July 2026 seeking an order to confirm the cancellation of the Company's share premium account of £19,193,498 and the cancellation of a newly issued fully paid Capital Reduction Share of £1,706,780 (together, the Reduction).

Notice is further given that the application is directed to be heard before a Judge of the Insolvency and Companies Court on 11 August 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Any creditor or shareholder of the Company wishing to oppose the making of an order to confirm the Reduction should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by legal representative for that purpose. A copy of the Part 8 claim form may be obtained from the Company's solicitors:

Blake Morgan LLP of New Kings Court, Tollgate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 3LG (ref: STA/566199/13).

Dated: 1 August 2026

RESIDENTIAL SECURE INCOME PLC

Claim No: CR-2026-003975

In the High Court of Justice Business and Property Courts of England and Wales Companies Court (Chd)

In the matter of Residential Secure Income plc (Company Number 10683026)

And in the matter of the Companies Act 2006

Notice is hereby given that on 22 July 2026 a Claim was issued by the High Court of Justice for an order confirming the cancellation of the amount standing to the credit of the share premium account of Residential Secure Income plc (the Company).

And notice is further given that the Claim is directed to be heard before an Insolvency and Companies Court Judge on 11 August 2026 in the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Court, Companies Court, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL.

Any creditor or shareholder of the Company or any other person claiming to be interested in the relief sought, desiring to oppose the making of the Order for the confirmation of the above cancellation should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by legal representative authorised for that purpose. A copy of the Claim will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the solicitors named below on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

Hogan Lovells Cadwalader International LLP
Reference: JVF/96132.005
Solicitors for the above-named Company

MISSING FREEHOLDER
The freeholder of 12 Oliver Avenue, South Norwood SE25 6TY ("the Property"),Mr Nasir Majeed, cannot be located. The leaseholder intends to acquire the freehold under the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993.Anyone with information on Mr Nasir Majeed whereabouts should urgently contact James Compton of Comptons Solicitors of 90-92 Parkway, London, NW1 7AN, (e- jc@comptons.co.uk). Failing this, legal proceedings will be commenced.

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to S27 of the Trustee Act, 1925 that any person having a Claim against or an Interest in the Estate of any of the deceased persons whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had a notice.
WALTERS, James Joseph (otherwise Jimmy Walters). Late of 7 Woodhouse Cliff, Leeds LS6 2HF who died on 25th March 2023 particulars to Adrian Denson, 15th Floor, St. James Tower, 7 Charlotte Street, Manchester M1 4DZ by 2nd October 2026.

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to S27 of the Trustee Act, 1925 that any person having a Claim against or an Interest in the Estate of any of the deceased persons whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had a notice.
HORNE, Andrew John of 14 Little Dene, Lodore Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 3NZ died on 30/06/2026, claims under s27 Trustee Act to Ward Hadaway, Sandgate House, 102 Quayside, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3DX, ref: (PC)AAH.KJA.MAB.HOR187.1, by 02/10/2026

CR-2026-004250
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES COMPANIES COURT (ChD) IN THE MATTER OF AIRTEL AFRICA PLC AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 14 July 2026 confirming the cancellation of the capital redemption reserve of the above-named Company, and the Statement of Capital approved by the Court, were registered with the Registrar of Companies on 15 July 2026.
Dated 1 August 2026
Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer LLP
Exchange House
Primrose Street
London EC2A 2EG
Tel: 020 7374 8000
Fax: 020 7374 0888
Ref: 31073971
Solicitors for the Company

Why peace eludes us when everything is under control

Credo
J John

If Jesus were to walk through Britain today, I suspect he would notice something immediately. Not our politics. Not our technology or our divisions. He'd notice our exhaustion.

We live in an age of unprecedented convenience and unparalleled weariness. Never has a generation had so many ways to save time and so little time to spare.

We can communicate instantly with the other side of the world, yet many fail to connect with the person opposite us at breakfast. We are permanently connected but increasingly disconnected.

There is another paradox. We have more choices than any generation in history, yet many feel more overwhelmed than ever. Our grandparents worried they had too few options. We worry because we have too many. Every day presents a stream of decisions, large and small. What to watch. What to buy. What to read. What to believe. What to ignore. Small wonder that so many people feel so exhausted.

We are not just physically tired. We are decision tired. Attention tired. Information tired. Maybe comparison tired.

This world rarely gives us a moment's peace. Yet human beings do not flourish on constant stimulation. We need moments to think, to reflect.

It is striking that Jesus often withdrew from the demands placed upon him, and sought solitude. Long before anyone spoke about mindfulness or wellbeing, Jesus understood that a busy life is not necessarily a meaningful life.

Anxiety has become the background music of life. It hums beneath the school run, the commute, the medical appointment and the late-night glance at the phone.

Previous generations worried about famine, plague and war. We worry about those too. The difference is that now we can monitor them around the clock. We carry devices with more computing power than 1960s space rockets, yet many of us cannot get through a Monday without feeling overwhelmed.

I wonder what Jesus would say if he sat beside us. Maybe he would say what he said 2,000 years ago: "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew xi, 28)

It's still a most remarkable invitation. Not "Come to me when you've got your life together" or "Come to me when you're strong". He says, "Come when you're weary."

This is so refreshing. Exhaustion is not a disqualification.

Christianity is often associated with rules, yet when you read the Gospels, what strikes you is how often Jesus speaks of trust, hope, peace and love. Not the absence of trouble. Peace amid trouble. There is a difference. Anyone feels calm on a still sea. The challenge is to find peace when the waves crash over the boat. Jesus knew that was possible.

We check our phones. Scan the headlines. Rehearse tomorrow's problems. Search for reassurance. Yet reassurance has a short shelf life. No sooner is one worry settled than another arrives.

The world has given us access to more information than ever. What it has not given us is peace. Knowledge cannot always tell us what to do with our fears.

Jesus pointed people towards something that seems almost revolutionary: trust. Not optimism. Trust.

One of the great illusions of life is the belief that peace comes when all is under control. When was everything ever under control?

The opposite of anxiety is not certainty. It is trust. That insight may be one reason Jesus continues to attract attention 20 centuries later. He did not promise life without storms. He promised we would not face them alone. There is something attractive about that: our lives matter. We do not have to carry the weight of the world on our own shoulders.

Perhaps Jesus would not begin with a demand, a doctrine. Perhaps he would begin with an invitation.

"Come to me."

Two thousand years on, it's still one of the most refreshing sentences ever spoken.

The Rev Canon J John is a minister, speaker and author

Weather

Today Scattered showers in Scotland and northern England. Sunny spells elsewhere. Max 26C (79F), min 7C (45F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	17	PC	0.0	10.2
Aberporth	17	S	0.0	9.9
Anglesey	17	PC	0.0	11.6
Aviemore	17	C	0.0	8.0
Barnstaple	19	S	0.0	**
Bedford	22	S	0.2	**
Belfast	14	R	2.2	3.6
Birmingham	22	C	0.0	**
Bournemouth	24	S	0.0	6.4
Bridlington	21	PC	0.0	**
Bristol	21	S	0.0	6.8
Camborne	18	S	0.0	6.2
Cardiff	20	S	0.0	5.6
Edinburgh	17	C	0.0	9.4
Eskdalemuir	14	R	0.8	8.7
Glasgow	16	C	0.2	9.9
Hereford	21	PC	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	23	PC	0.0	10.5
Ipswich	21	PC	0.0	6.8
Isle of Man	17	S	0.0	12.3
Isle of Wight	26	S	0.0	**
Jersey	20	S	0.0	4.0
Keswick	17	PC	0.0	**
Kinloss	17	**	1.0	6.7
Leeds	15	C	0.2	**
Lerwick	13	C	1.8	1.5
Leuchars	18	C	0.0	12.8
Lincoln	20	PC	0.0	6.2
Liverpool	18	S	0.0	**
London	24	PC	0.0	6.2
Lyneham	21	S	0.2	3.5
Manchester	21	C	0.2	8.9
Margate	22	PC	0.0	8.6
Milford Haven	20	PC	0.0	**
Newcastle	18	C	0.0	**
Nottingham	21	PC	0.0	5.3
Orkney	16	S	1.0	**
Oxford	22	S	0.4	**
Plymouth	22	S	0.0	**
Portland	21	C	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	19	PC	0.0	**
Shoreham	24	PC	0.0	8.9
Shrewsbury	21	PC	0.0	5.5
Snowdonia	17	PC	0.0	**
Southend	23	C	0.0	10.7
South Uist	15	C	1.4	**
Stornoway	15	R	0.2	3.1
Tiree	15	C	2.0	8.9
Whitehaven	17	PC	0.2	7.3
Wick	**	PC	0.2	**
Yeovilton	22	PC	0.0	1.8

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	33	S	Madeira	27	PC
Amsterdam	24	PC	Madrid	33	S
Athens	30	S	Malaga	27	PC
Auckland	**	**	Mallorca	33	S
Bahrain	40	S	Malta	34	S
Bangkok	31	PC	Melbourne	12	PC
Barbados	30	PC	Mexico City	25	B
Barcelona	31	PC	Miami	36	B
Beijing	**	**	Milan	35	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	28	B
Belgrade	35	S	Montreal	26	PC
Berlin	28	S	Moscow	23	B
Bermuda	29	C	Mumbai	29	M
Bordeaux	26	C	Munich	34	S
Brussels	25	PC	Nairobi	23	B
Bucharest	29	S	Naples	35	S
Budapest	36	**	New Orleans	33	PC
Buenos Aires	**	**	New York	24	B
Cairo	34	PC	Nice	30	S
Calcutta	31	**	Nicosia	36	S
Canberra	11	PC	Oslo	19	S
Cape Town	23	S	Paris	26	B
Chicago	29	B	Perth	22	PC
Copenhagen	21	PC	Prague	32	S
Corfu	36	S	Reykjavik	15	S
Delhi	32	**	Riga	29	S
Dubai	46	S	Rio de Janeiro	27	B
Dublin	20	B	Riyadh	44	S
Faro	27	S	Rome	34	S
Florence	37	S	San Francisco	23	PC
Frankfurt	32	S	Santiago	18	S
Geneva	29	SH	São Paulo	19	PC
Gibraltar	27	PC	Seoul	31	B
Helsinki	26	PC	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	25	T	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	26	PC
Istanbul	28	PC	Stockholm	21	S
Jerusalem	33	S	Sydney	16	S
Johannesburg	15	PC	Tel Aviv	33	S
Kuala Lumpur	32	PC	Tenerife	29	S
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	31	PC
Lanzarote	33	S	Vancouver	22	PC
Las Palmas	27	PC	Venice	**	**
Lima	22	B	Vienna	36	S
Lisbon	28	S	Warsaw	32	PC
Los Angeles	25	PC	Washington	28	B
Luxor	40	S	Zurich	**	**

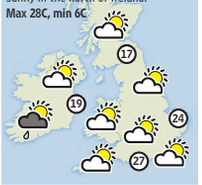
Five days ahead

A largely dry end to the weekend, gradually turning more changeable through next week

Tomorrow

Warm in the southeast. Mostly dry with sunny spells in England, Scotland and Wales. Scattered showers in the south and west of Ireland. Dry and sunny in the north of Ireland.

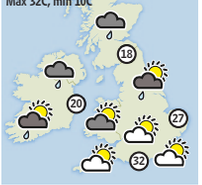
Max 28C, min 6C



Monday

Hot and mostly dry in the south of England. Scattered showers in Scotland, Wales, Ireland and northern and southwestern England.

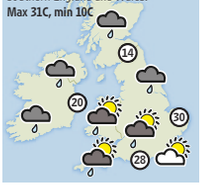
Max 32C, min 10C



Tuesday

Rain in Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern England. Scattered showers elsewhere, heavy at times. Sunny spells between the showers in southern England and Wales.

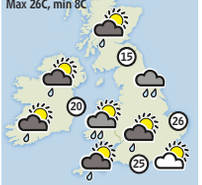
Max 31C, min 10C



Wednesday

Rain in Scotland, northern England and Northern Ireland. Scattered showers, heavy at times, in Wales, Republic of Ireland and southern England.

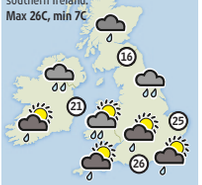
Max 26C, min 8C



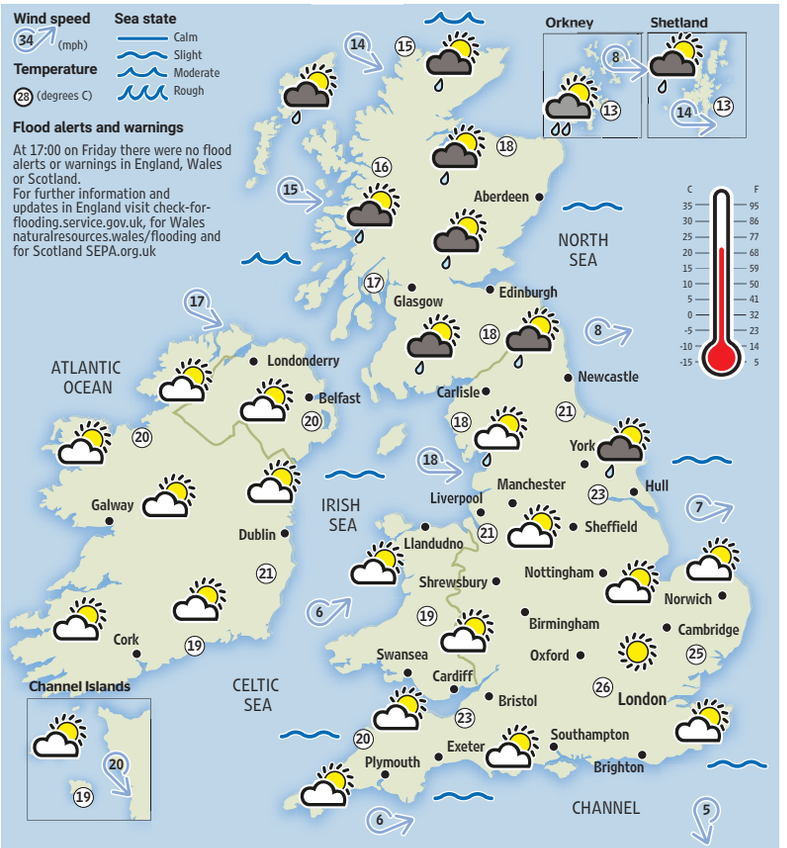
Thursday

Unsettled with spells of rain and showers across the British Isles. The best chance of some sunny spells will be across southern England, Wales and southern Ireland.

Max 26C, min 7C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest



General situation: Mostly sunny and dry for southern England, Wales and Ireland. Scattered showers in northern Scotland. Morning showers in southern Scotland and northern England, turning sunnier later.

E Mids, E Anglia, London, Cen S Eng, SE Eng: Warm, mostly dry and sunny. A small chance for an afternoon shower in the far southeast. Light westerly winds, veering northerly later. Maximum 26C (79F), minimum 8C (46F).

Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, IoM, SW Scotland, Borders, NE Eng, Argyll, Lake District, NW Eng, Cen N Eng, E Eng: Scattered showers in the morning, turning drier this afternoon. Light westerly winds. Maximum 23C (73F), minimum 7C (45F).

N Wales, S Wales, W Mids, SW Eng, Channel Is: Dry and mostly sunny with light cloud developing in the evening. Light westerly winds, turning northerly this evening. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 8C (46F).

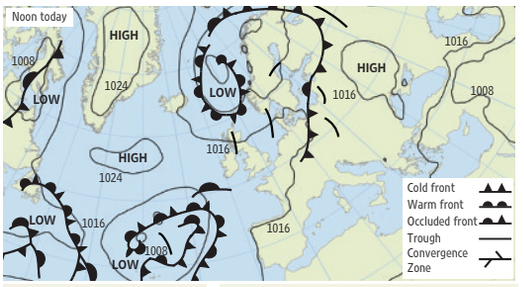
NW Scotland, NE Scotland, N Isles, Moray Firth, Cen Highland, Aberdeen: Scattered showers with spells of sunshine. Showers will become more isolated in northwestern areas in the afternoon. Light westerly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 6C (43F).

Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Partly cloudy with a small risk of an isolated shower in the morning. Light westerly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 7C (45F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	03:39	4.2	16:15	4.0
Avonmouth	09:54	12.1	22:08	12.4
Belfast	01:11	3.4	13:35	3.1
Cardiff	09:36	11.4	21:51	11.6
Devonport	08:27	5.0	20:35	5.3
Dover	01:22	6.2	13:38	6.5
Dublin	01:33	4.0	14:06	3.7
Falmouth	07:53	4.8	19:59	5.0
Greenock	02:43	3.5	15:04	3.1
Harwich	02:16	3.7	14:21	3.8
Holyhead	--:--	--	12:59	5.2
Hull	08:44	7.3	21:17	7.0
Leith	05:00	5.4	17:30	5.3
Liverpool	01:24	9.2	13:44	8.8
London Bridge	04:25	6.8	16:40	6.8
Lowestoft	11:57	2.6	--:--	--
Milford Haven	08:46	6.6	21:03	6.9
Morecambe	01:34	9.3	13:54	8.9
Newhaven	01:25	6.4	13:49	6.5
Newquay	07:37	6.5	19:54	6.8
Oban	08:19	3.7	20:39	3.9
Penzance	07:10	5.1	19:29	5.4
Portsmouth	01:44	4.4	14:18	4.5
Shoreham	01:26	5.9	13:50	6.0
Southampton	00:53	4.3	13:16	4.3
Swansea	08:52	8.8	21:07	9.0
Tees	06:00	5.4	18:37	5.2
Weymouth	09:35	1.8	21:49	2.0



Synoptic situation

A trough located over western Scotland will bring showery rain and cloud to northern Britain. A building ridge of high pressure over the southwest of England will continue to bring largely dry and settled weather. Low pressure across the Atlantic will push northeastwards, bringing rain to the south of Ireland tomorrow and later to Scotland and northern England.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Thorney Island, West Sussex, 27.1C
Coldest: Cairngorn, 1.3C
Wettest: Santon Downham, Suffolk, 16.4mm
Sunniest: Charterhall, 13.6hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.24
Sun sets: 20.48
Moon rises: 21.47
Moon sets: 09.45 Sun
Third quarter: August 6

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:52-04:38
Belfast	21:55-05:06
Birmingham	21:30-04:59
Cardiff	21:31-05:08
Exeter	21:29-05:12
Glasgow	21:54-04:54
Liverpool	21:38-05:00
London	21:19-04:56
Manchester	21:35-04:56
Newcastle	21:39-04:47
Norwich	21:17-04:46
Penzance	21:35-05:22
Sheffield	21:32-04:54

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

Something strange happened on Thursday in southern England. A shroud of wet stuff fell from the sky, with people coming out especially to marvel at the phenomenon. This was rain, but it was only a very modest affair, something between a mizzle and a drizzle, and in Scotland sometimes called a weetichtie.

This sprinkling was so light and so brief it made next to no difference to ground baked hard by weeks of drought, and next morning dawned in bright sunshine once more, although the air was much fresher. It was in fact the result of a puny weather front so feeble it struggled to conjure up much rain before it all fizzled out.

Tantalising brief rains have happened before during droughts — in 1976 crowds at Lord's cricket ground cheered when a few drops of rain stopped play for 15 minutes before hot sunshine returned.

Such fleeting rain makes no difference to breaking droughts. What is needed is prolonged and substantial rain to allow rainwater to soak into the ground.

Hopes for rain are now focused on the early part of next week between Monday and Wednesday in the north, especially Scotland where rainfall could be heavy. But some showers and thunderstorms may also bring sporadic heavy rainfall in some southern parts of Britain with light rain likely elsewhere.

The outlook into August and September suggests more warm, dry weather, possibly interrupted by spells of cooler, wetter weather. One driving force behind this outlook is the long-running marine heatwave in the seas around the British Isles, pumping warmth from the sea surface into the atmosphere around the UK. Added to that is the growing power of global warming.

But one good thing for Atlantic weather patterns this year is a reduced risk of tropical storms and hurricanes, thanks to an intense El Niño developing in the Pacific. El Niños spawn high-level winds that sweep across the tropical seas of the Atlantic and help snuff out any developing hurricane activity.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

WeatherQuest
weatherquest.co.uk

Explore. Plan. And now book with The Times.

The Times and Sunday Times is a unique and trusted source of travel inspiration. Now you can trust us to take you there too.

Call 0808 231 5090 or visit thetimes.com/holidays

TIMES Holidays

The Times Saturday Quiz Olav Bjortomt

1 Which 1988 film was based on Gary K Wolf's novel *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*

2 Seymour Simon's book *Destination: Moon* tells the story of the Space Race between the US and which country?

3 In England, how many "quarter days" are there in a year?

4 Which political party coined the slogan "Put Scotland first" in 1946?

5 The reign of which 20th-century British monarch lasted 325 days?

6 Which London cathedral features the American Memorial Chapel, Geometric Staircase and Stone Gallery?

7 Which Florence art gallery was opened to the public in 1769 by Peter Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany?

8 Tim Berners-Lee based which invention on Enquire, an information retrieval program he wrote in 1980?

9 The adjective "pavonine" relates to which flamboyant male bird of the genus *Pavo*?

10 Which Polish composer dedicated his first published set of nocturnes to Madame Pleyel in 1832?

11 Completed in 1912, the Casa Milà in Barcelona was the last civil building designed by which Catalan architect?

12 Which Scotsman developed the first practical pneumatic tyre in 1888?

20

ALAMY

13 *Rein Me In* is a 2025 duet by Olivia Dean and which singer and songwriter from North Shields?

14 Which former *Castle* star plays the LAPD officer John Nolan in the US TV police drama *The Rookie*?

15 Which Cambridgeshire town, six miles east of Peterborough, is known for its Straw Bear Festival?

16 The Argentinian writer Manuel Mujica Lainez named which 1962 novel after a town about 40 miles north of Rome?

17 *Dial M for Murder* (1952) and *Wait Until Dark* (1966) are stage thrillers by which English playwright?

18 *The Power and the Glory* (2025) is Jonathan Wilson's history of which international football tournament?

19 Which $5.5bn sports venue in Inglewood, California, is the most expensive stadium ever built?

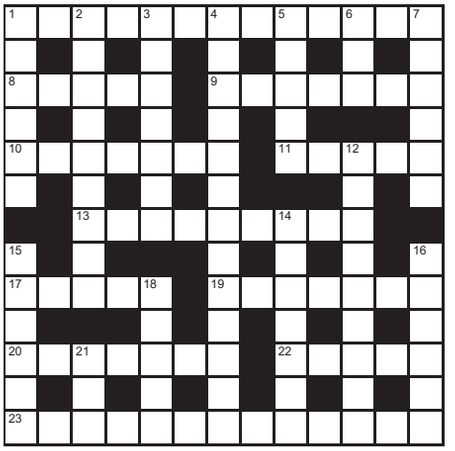
20 The flag of which southern region of Spain is pictured?

Answers below right

Last week's O Tempora! solution

O Tempora! Crossword DLXV by Basil

A weekly crossword for the classically minded



Clues, which may be straight or mildly cryptic, always lead to answers in Latin

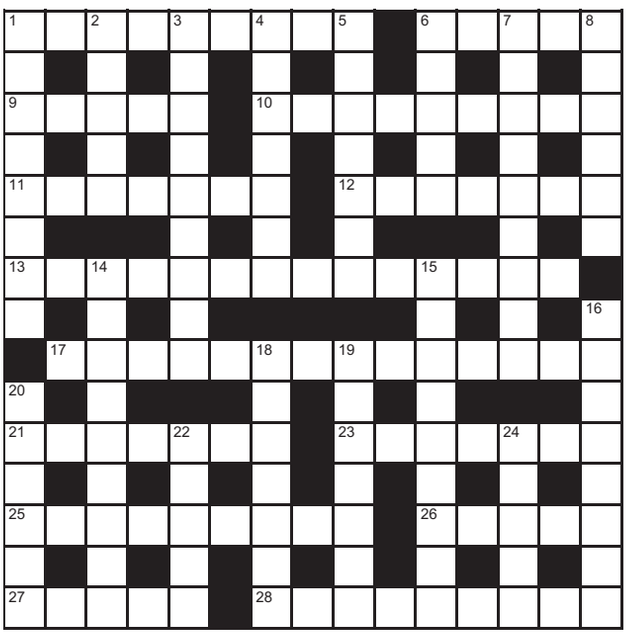
Across

1 To have set up rocks (as a trophy?) (9,4)
8 Saevus; wild, severe, violent (5)
9 Fratres; vel gens iuxta Gallos habitans (7)
10 On their own citadel; in their own capital? (4,3)
11 Fluminis orae (5)
13 I will happily give (5,4)
17 A marching column of soldiers (5)
19 Final things (n pl) (7)
20 Here we are (7)
22 9 ad ludum ___: brothers about to come to the game (5)
23 The circle of lands, world (5,8)

Down

1 Ladders (6)
2 Farmer (acc) (9)
3 To have anointed (pf inf unguo) (7)
4 To have carried the standards (5,8)
5 A slip, mistake (5)
6 A wing (3)
7 Tops, crowns, highest honours (6)
12 I pursue, hunt (9)
14 More substantial, distinguished (7)
15 I will prepare ... (... Romeo for a captain, say?) (6)
16 A ray, beam, spoke (acc) (6)
18 Lucus, silva parva (3 decl neut) (5)
21 Non supra; ___ iudice under consideration, until it's all over (3)

Times Crossword No 29,610



A £20 Waterstones gift voucher will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened on Thursday. Enter by post to: Times Crossword No 29,610, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or by email to: prize@thetimes.co.uk, with "Crossword 29610" in the subject line. Open to 18+, UK & ROI residents only. Winners and solutions will appear on Monday week.

Name/Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Across

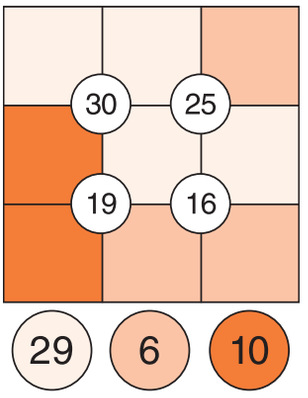
1 Unappealing companion unable to reach out? (9)
6 Retributive justice? More still to be announced (5)
9 Regressive tax on millionaire's primary asset (5)
10 Dipper's an unusual waterbird (9)
11 Fuss about origins of aristocratic love triangle may be so (7)
12 Field behind wood with fine lettuce (7)
13 Verbosity spoiled Nelson's wedding (4-10)
17 Tense, cross game (8,6)
21 Smash things (7)
23 Devious first lady receiving endorsement from the Right (7)
25 Setter praises girl — it clarifies things (9)
26 Excellent pair of Roman bones (5)
27 Red hawthorn on Georgia's borders (5)
28 Second risk assessor checking new shelter (9)

Down

1 Lifted coat covering one single item of underwear (8)
2 They welcome visitors in Bermuda Triangle (5)
3 Old lady with sex appeal and common sense (6,3)
4 Regularly hiding because they ran from Tibet? (7)
5 Faint sound of evil priest's vestment (7)
6 Some bloke poking around for bread in Moscow (5)
7 Uptight about journalists and their boss (9)
8 Commercial break with no purpose (6)
14 Some lingo, newly presented? (9)
15 Inappropriate method for catching rook, toad or rodent (6,3)
16 Dispatch somebody heartlessly (8)
18 Retired artist brings up unpaid debts (7)
19 Betrayal, ultimately without motive (7)
20 Chinese predictive text? (1,5)
22 Lay first claim to land, suspiciously deserted (5)
24 I support part of UK to the north (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,609

Sakuro No 4809



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct.
Solution *MindGames in Saturday Review*

Quiz answers **1** *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* **2** Soviet Union **3** Four **4** Scottish National Party (SNP) **5** Edward VIII **6** St Paul's Cathedral **7** Uffizi **8** World Wide Web **9** Peacock **10** Frédéric Chopin **11** Antoni Gaudi **12** John Boyd Dunlop **13** Sam Fender **14** Nathan Fillion **15** Whittlesey or Whittlesea **16** *Bomarzo* **17** Frederick Knott **18** Fifa World Cup **19** SoFi **20** Andalusia.
Concise Quintagram answers **1** Edgy **2** Nowhere **3** Toolbox **4** Rossini **5** Yoghurt.

QUICK SHIP

Save 10% off* the Lucca Dual Motor Power Recliner (Adjustable Head, Leg and Lumbar) range in Torello Blue Leather delivered within **7-14 working days.**+

HSL

Feel Good Furniture
Experts **since 1968**

Find your local showroom, order online or book a FREE Home Demonstration

01924 486903 | hslchairs.com

'Excellent'
★★★★★
Trustpilot
from over
30,000 reviews

Sizes to fit you. Get your FREE Exclusive Chair Fitting in-store today.

*Save up to 50% across our collections on orders placed between 1st July and 31st August 2026. Cannot be used in conjunction with Great Deals or any other promotional offer, nor on retrospective purchases. Discounts shown are correct at time of printing and are subject to change without notice. **Price refers to the Chair shown whilst stocks last. +Quickship Delivery is ready to deliver within 14 working days for orders placed Monday to Thursday before 12pm, subject to postcode restrictions. All offers apply while stocks last. For full details and postcode restrictions, please ask in store or visit www.hslchairs.com. High Seat Limited, Units 1–3a Grange Road Industrial Estate, Grange Road, Batley, WF17 6LN. | Media: THT26

THE TIMES

Saturday August 1 2026

The critic's top wines from Aldi and Lidl

Plus How to cook a Mexican feast at home

Weekend

Travel starts on page 37

Am I undateable — because I had a baby at 49?

Holidays for wild swimmers

Cottages and cabins on the water

Picky bits — how healthy are they?

A nutritionist rates them all

COVER AND BELOW: CARMEL KING FOR THE TIMES

I still want love. Choosing to have a baby should not disqualify me

Men seem to be put off by Lisa Oxenham's decision to have a baby alone. Why, she asks

I knew the call was going badly when the pause was long enough for me to check the signal. I had matched with a surgeon on Hinge, the dating app. He lived in Fulham, looked handsome and seemed normal. I use Hinge reluctantly. I do not have the hopeful energy of someone who thinks love waits just two postcodes away. I use the app because a small part of me still wonders: what if?

I do not have time to waste. I am 50, a journalist and a single mother of two. My daughter is nine and my son is an 11-month-old baby. For me, dating has to be fairly efficient. After we messaged, I suggested a phone call. It is better to know quickly if we connect than to spend three weeks trading witty texts.

Once we were on the phone, I asked if he'd looked at my Instagram. I link it to my Hinge deliberately. My life is right there — the children, the work, the baby I had alone at 49. If that's too much for someone, better to know early.

He hadn't. In fact, he sounded offended. "No, of course not," he said, as if checking someone's Instagram before calling them was somehow beneath him.

So I explained. Two children. The younger a baby whom I had on my own after years of fertility treatment. Not an accident, not a wobble — a decision I made because I wanted him and I wasn't prepared to wait for circumstances that might never arrive.

There was silence. Then the man reacted with the alarm of a homeowner discovering subsidence. "Oh nooooo. No, no, no. That's not what I want at all." He then outlined his requirements. He liked time alone. He wanted intimacy — though he implied this was rarely a problem for him. Galleries, dinners, a companion. His children were in their twenties and he had absolutely no intention of returning to the baby stage. He'd suspected, he said, that I might be "too good to be true". I felt a flash of humiliation followed very quickly by irritation. Not because he didn't want a baby in his life — that is his right — but because he seemed to have mistaken my full life for a flaw in the product.

By this point the man in the photographs (handsome, polished and impressive on paper) had completely disappeared. The voice on the phone had managed it in minutes. I said, "OK, well, goodbye and have a good life." We hung up. I had a feeling he'd be in touch.

Later that evening, a message arrived. A small, ridiculous part of me thought: ha, he can't resist me. Instead he surprised me. It had been lovely speaking to me, he said. I was an interesting and remarkable person. We might not be completely aligned in what we were looking for but he'd still enjoy meeting for a coffee sometime, even just as friends. I was, apparently, "top of his type" on Hinge. He felt we deserved a hello. This was flattering, obviously. It was also completely maddening. He'd recoiled from my actual life then circled back hours later to appreciate me from a comfortable distance. I said yes to coffee but I mentioned I'd need to bring my son. He suddenly couldn't make it.

People have every right to their preferences. A mother with a nine-year-old and a baby is a complex reality — I live these logistics every day. My handbag is full of nappies, a pram blocks the hallway and my evenings are rarely spontaneous.

But what struck me wasn't that he didn't want it. It was the recoil. The sense that my life was something I had revealed too late, like damp in a basement. As if motherhood, especially complicated motherhood, is a warning label. This was only a phone call about a possible date. We hadn't met. I might not have liked him either. Perhaps he had pinned too much hope on the photograph, on the fantasy of me, and then felt disappointed when an actual life appeared behind it.

It is 2026. Blended families, IVF, solo parents and stepchildren: none of this is remarkable any more. Lives don't follow the old order and most people know it. Yet dating hasn't caught up. A man in his fifties with children reads as stable and experienced. A woman in her fifties with a baby reads as complicated. The double standard is alive and completely unexamined.

I have been single for about seven or eight years and on the apps for most of that time. In theory they make sense for my life. I live in the countryside in Stroud, in Gloucestershire, which is beautiful but can feel isolating, especially in winter. I work in London every week so I tend to keep my preferences there too; it feels more likely that I will meet someone with a similar pace and outlook. And with two children, freelance work, school runs, a baby and a life split between places, I am not exactly drifting through bars with girlfriends every Thursday night, hoping to make eye contact with a stranger. That is why apps have been useful. They are convenient. I even kept an eye on them during pregnancy, a way of saying: I am still here. I am still a woman. I still have a future beyond nappies, work and the next scan.

But convenience has its own trap. The apps can make you feel as though you are doing something about love when really you are just scrolling. They offer the promise of possibility without the risk of real

Lisa Oxenham with her baby son and, left, with him and her nine-year-old daughter on holiday in Greece

> "My Hinge date, a surgeon, reacted with the alarm of a homeowner discovering subsidence

life. After seven or eight years that promise can start to feel thin.

When do you disclose your reality? I always choose honesty. My children are the centre of my life. My daughter made me a mother. My son arrived when I was 49, after a long and expensive fertility journey, because I wanted him so much that I kept going. Solo motherhood by choice is more visible than ever. More women are doing it and more conversations are happening about it. Dating somehow hasn't got the memo. Later motherhood still gets framed as selfish or reckless or somehow more acceptable with a husband to make it conventionally legible.

When I decided to have my son alone at 49, I knew it might narrow things romantically. I knew some men would find it too much. But my longing for him was bigger than my fear of ending up alone. He wasn't a reckless choice. He was the point.

No, I am not looking for someone to rescue me. No, I am not trying to recruit a replacement father. No, my children are not baggage. But yes, I still want love. Yes, I still want desire. Yes, I still want to be seen as a woman, not just a mother. I would love a companion. I would love laughter, loyalty, desire and deep conversation. I would love someone to go to galleries and dinners with too — but not someone who sees my children as the thing that disqualifies me from that possibility.

And yes, eventually I would love a father figure for my son. Not a man dragged into anything against his will; someone who sees my son not as a complication but as part of what makes this life worth joining. This is why I keep one eye on dating apps — a form of romantic insurance, just in case someone extraordinary happens to be nearby on a Tuesday night. Just in case the man who understands my life, my children and my ambition appears while I'm sitting at home, half working and half answering messages.

But I'm beginning to think the apps have made me passive. They create the illusion

> More and more women are solo mothers by choice. Dating somehow hasn't got the memo

of action. They keep the door ajar but rarely push you through it.

Perhaps the apps aren't the only reason modern dating can feel so ambiguous. It has become increasingly easy to maintain connections that are warm, flirtatious and emotionally significant without ever asking what they are becoming.

I have accepted that uncertainty at times, partly because possibility can feel more comforting than a definitive answer. But I am beginning to understand that a lack of clarity is also a kind of answer and that it is my responsibility to set boundaries around what I am prepared to accept.

Not every ambiguous connection involves bad intentions. Sometimes two people simply want different things or avoid the conversation that might change what they already have. But something can matter and still not be what you need.

The surgeon call pushed something in me. Not because he was cruel — he wasn't, exactly — but because I realised I no longer want to offer my life up to strangers and wait for them to decide whether it is acceptable.

My friends tell me I'll meet someone. That I'm attractive, funny and independent. That it's just a matter of time. And I want to believe them. But I also find myself wondering: is it my age? My decision to become a mother at 49 on my own? And then I wonder why I'm asking the question at all. Why is it my life that needs to be more acceptable rather than the expectations that need to catch up?

I'm not going to stop being upfront. I still think you should say things early. I'm not going to hide my son to get someone to a second date. But I'd rather say it sitting across from someone than down a phone line, where a baby is just a fact that either fits someone's plan or doesn't. It's harder to write someone off when you've already seen them roll their eyes at their own madness, when you like them a bit before you've done the sums.

So the next one gets a coffee, not a call. He'll meet my daughter's opinions and the pram in the hallway eventually. But he'll meet me first.

A date every night of the week? Why I tried 'roster dating'

I was midway through my first date with Ben when I received a text from Fred asking what I was up to. The date I was on had been fine: Ben was attractive, chatty, and his phone had a Frida Kahlo case (a promising sign), but by 11pm we were two martinis in and I was running out of steam.

So I kissed Ben goodbye, hailed a black cab and went to meet Fred with his friends in Soho for our third date instead. The next day, I set a date to see Ben again before arranging a drink with Will, who I'd just matched with on Hinge.

This is roster dating, a philosophy that I and many other singles have subscribed to in the hope of finding love/having fun/getting an ego boost while shielding yourself from true emotional vulnerability (delete as applicable).

In the past, this kind of behaviour would have been primarily ascribed to promiscuous men who were "playing the field" or, as it's known in modern parlance, "f***boyery". Now, it's a commonplace way of keeping your options open — and women like me are embracing it too.

For a long time, roster dating was my modus operandi. I'd meet someone I liked — then immediately go for a drink with someone else. Eventually, I'd get to a point whereby there were four or five men on rotation. I was always pretty subtle about it, never explicitly telling anyone I was dating multiple people at once because it was always implied, and I assumed they were too.

Personally, I wasn't ever sleeping with more than one man at a time, but I have a friend who stored her roster's phone contacts by geographical location, so she could suggest coming over to whoever lived nearest to wherever she happened to be that night out.

"I literally kept a list in my Notes app called 'roster' so I could keep track of the men I was dating," another friend, Milly, 34, says. "At one point there were about 15 men on there."

The idea is not necessarily to be a modern-day Don Juanita but simply to navigate the increasingly complex contemporary dating landscape — one defined by casual sex, dating app fatigue and serial situationships.

"For as long as I can remember, I've been a single-file dater, seeing one person at a time to properly explore that connection," Kelly, 37, says, "but it got increasingly intense and emotionally taxing." Knowing many of her male friends were dating multiple people, she decided to do the same. "Apps like Hinge and Feeld made it easy."

In many ways, roster dating can feel empowering, rewriting decades of social scripts that told women they couldn't date as liberally as men without being slutshamed. "I actually made player cards with AI for the guys I was seeing, featuring funny references and a scoring system," Hetty, 35, says. "I never even wanted a 'roster', but this dating scene is so rough, we might as well try to laugh at the ridiculousness of it."

It might seem counterintuitive, but having a roster can be useful if you meet someone you really like. There's no

Olivia Petter

better way to ameliorate anxieties about waiting for someone to text you back than having another person — or four — to text instead. "It helps take the pressure off a North Star crush," Bella, 29, who has often had a roster going in the past few years of being single, agrees.

For me, the roster is exclusive to the earliest stages of dating. Going on first, second and sometimes third dates with a few people can be a helpful exercise, exposing you to many different types of prospective partners, teaching you more about what you do and don't want from someone in the long term.

Of course there are caveats. For starters, there's a fine line between dating people casually and using them as props to mitigate feelings of insecurity and disappointment: "I try not to intentionally seek validation from other guys just because I'm in an uncertain spot with one," Bella explains. "There's also the time factor: too robust a roster drains precious energy resources and dilutes each connection."

The liberation you might feel at the start of your roster journey can also fade. Often, the men on my roster weren't people I saw any future with. I was trying them on for size, seeing if anything fitted: the taciturn philosopher who didn't want children; the film producer who'd recently "found" Buddhism; the actor who talked performatively about bestiality while eating strawberries whole

> A friend keeps a roster list on her phone. At one point she was seeing 15 men on rotation

(who knows?). Dating them all at once took the pressure off, making it easy to reduce them to characters who couldn't hurt me. Suffice to say, none of them became boyfriends.

In retrospect, I can recognise that having a roster wasn't so much a sexual strategy as a coping mechanism — a way to weaken romantic attachments and alleviate the pain of flakiness and emotional unavailability. One of the reasons I started dating like this was because a man I'd been seeing for four months decided, out of the blue, that he wasn't ready for a serious relationship, an epiphany he had just days after saying he was falling in love with me.

I haven't had a roster for a while. For me, it offered the illusion of multiple romantic connections but left me with nothing more meaningful than a few pithy anecdotes. Fine for certain phases of life, but at 32, looking for lasting love, I simply don't have the time, energy or emotional wherewithal for it any more.

I'm also old enough to know that dating as a form of escapism rarely ends well. It's generally better to invest in yourself and learn to get comfortable being single. And trust me, there's only so many dates one can pack into the same evening.

All names have been changed

Olivia Petter

The nutritionist's verdict: How

Some picnic staples count towards your 5-a-day. Nutritionist Eli Brecher rates the best (and worst) from the supermarkets

Summer means one thing above all else for how we eat: everything becomes portable. Lunch is a spread of charcuterie, salad and dips on a picnic blanket. Dinner turns into a meze of little dishes shared in the garden or the park. And the British Heart Foundation (BHF) has now confirmed what a lot of us might have hoped was true — many picky bits can count as one of your five-a-day.

Hummus, falafel, tzatziki, a spoonful of salsa. According to the BHF these picnic staples can genuinely be good for your health provided that you know what you're looking at on the label. It's good news, because picnics are where I see people relax the most around food — you're grabbing what looks good in the chiller aisle, packing a bag and hoping for the best.

But grabbing on the go doesn't have to mean grabbing blind. The gap between a picnic that leaves you nourished and one that leaves you sluggish by 4pm often comes down to a handful of details you wouldn't notice unless you turned the tub over.

So this week I went through the shelves to pick out the picnic staples many of us reach for without thinking and rated each one out of five based on what is actually in it, not what the packaging promises.

Eli Brecher

Here's the reassuring part. A genuinely healthy picnic is completely possible and it doesn't require kale chips or willpower. Sixteen of the 31 products rated four or five out of five for health, in fact. Here is my verdict, from the snacks that can be bought in abundance to those that are fine in moderation — and those that are best consumed as an occasional treat.

Eli Brecher is a registered nutritionist and host of *The Gut 360 Podcast*

Antipasti

Cauldron Middle Eastern falafels
Health rating 5/5

High in fibre and plant protein from the chickpeas and low in saturated fat, these are filling and good for your gut health. One of the best picks on the list.

Odysea aubergine imam
Health rating 5/5

Whole aubergine, onion and tomato cooked in real extra virgin olive oil, high in fibre and completely plant-based. This is exactly the kind of picky bit the BHF is talking about when it says these foods count towards your five-a-day.

Unearthed Spanish spinach tortilla
Health rating 5/5

Made primarily from potato, egg and spinach, this is a proper wholefood antipasti option with a good balance of protein, carbohydrates and vegetables. A very healthy (and delicious) choice.

M&S grilled Turkish green olives
Health rating 5/5

This is about as close to a wholefood snack you can get in a tub and is rich in healthy monounsaturated fats. As with any olive, salt is naturally present so it's best to pair this with other, plainer snacks or salads rather than another salty dish.

M&S basil pesto marinated mozzarella
Health rating 4/5

This is high in protein with a shorter, more recognisable ingredients list than most marinated cheeses. Mozzarella is naturally lower in fat than a hard cheese like cheddar and the pesto here is made from pine nuts and basil rather than anything artificial.

M&S Spanish marinated anchovies
Health rating 4/5

A short ingredients list and a fantastic source of protein and omega-3 fats. Salt is moderate, as it is with any cured fish, but a small handful goes a long way for flavour.

Waitrose pickled cornichons and onions
Health rating 4/5

Low-calorie and an easy way to add extra vegetables and some tangy, pickled flavour to a picnic board. Salt is on the higher side for the portion so this is a garnish rather than a main event.

Tesco Finest sundried tomatoes with basil
Health rating 3/5

These do count towards your five-a-day and bring genuine fibre but the salt content is high for what looks like a small portion. Lovely scattered through a salad, although not recommended straight from the jar.

Sainsbury's Taste the Difference ricotta stuffed peppers
Health rating 3/5

Sweet peppers stuffed with a soft whey cheese in a parsley and sunflower oil dressing give you a fairly good vegetable base alongside some calcium from the cheese, but the rich dressing keeps it from scoring higher.

Waitrose No 1 prosciutto di Parma
Health rating 3/5

This has only two ingredients — pork and sea salt — and is an excellent source of protein. It is high in sodium though, and processed meats like this can raise long-term health risks if eaten in large quantities, so limit your intake to a few slices rather than a packet.

Sainsbury's Taste the Difference salami riserva
Health rating 2/5

High in protein but, like most cured meats, also high in saturated fat and salt, plus the nitrites used in curing. Fine to enjoy in small amounts as part of a spread but I wouldn't recommend any more than that.

M&S chorizo & chilli cheddar rollitos
Health rating 1/5

This is one to be mindful of. Saturated fat comes in at 19.2g per 100g, the highest of anything on this list, alongside 2.48g of salt and the nitrites used to cure the chorizo. Fine as a rare treat but I definitely wouldn't pair it with other cured meats and cheese.

healthy are your picky bits?

Dips

Waitrose extra virgin olive oil houmous
Health rating 5/5

The best dip on this list. Made mostly from chickpeas, tahini and extra virgin olive oil, it's naturally high in fibre, plant protein and healthy fats with very little sugar.

Holy Moly guacamole
Health rating 5/5

Nearly 90 per cent avocado, this is a genuinely wholefood dip. High in fibre, low in sugar and made from ingredients you would most likely have in your kitchen cupboard, it's proof that prepackaged foods do not have to be unhealthy.

Gran Luchito super smoky chipotle salsa
Health rating 4/5

Low-calorie and using flavours created by roasted tomatoes rather than sugar or oil, this is an easy way to add extra vegetables to your picnic plate. Salt is moderate so it's a dip for dipping, not for eating by the spoonful — but still a smart choice.

M&S whipped herby Greek feta dip
Health rating 3/5

A short ingredients list built on real Greek yoghurt and feta, so you're getting good quality dairy protein and calcium. It's higher in saturated fat and salt than the other dips here so I'd treat it as more of a treat than an everyday choice.

Waitrose sour cream and chive dip
Health rating 2/5

Soured cream is the main ingredient, which is fine, but the rest of the list — cornflour, rice starch, citrus fibre and potato fibre — comprises stabilisers rather than anything that adds nutritional value. Saturated fat is high and protein is negligible.

Salads

M&S 4 bean salad
Health rating 5/5

One of the best products on the list. Four types of whole legume mean high fibre and plant protein, with very little salt and no unnecessary additions. This alone can help you towards your five-a-day.

M&S tabbouleh salad
Health rating 4/5

The wholegrain bulgur wheat provides a good source of fibre to support gut health, while generous amounts of parsley, tomato and mint contribute to your five-a-day. A great low-calorie option.

Waitrose fruity Moroccan-style couscous salad
Health rating 3/5

Chickpeas and vegetables are a great start but the dried fruit pushes the sugar content notably higher than other salads. A tasty addition to a picnic, just not one to eat as your only side.

Sainsbury's Taste the Difference potato salad
Health rating 2/5

Comforting and a picnic classic but this one leans heavily on a mayonnaise dressing with added sugar and fibre is low. If you choose this, limit to a small side portion.

Crisps

Soffle's rosemary and thyme pitta chips
Health rating 5/5

Baked rather than fried, with the highest protein of any crisp on this list and a short, recognisable ingredients list. A brilliant example of a "healthier" crisp that still delivers proper flavour and crunch.

M&S Collection extra virgin olive oil crisps with Mediterranean sea salt
Health rating 4/5

Just three ingredients: potatoes, extra virgin olive oil and sea salt. One of the "cleanest" crisps you can buy and the fat comes from olive oil, which is actually good for you.

Eat Real hummus sea salt chips
Health rating 4/5

Made mainly from chickpea flour rather than potato, these provide more protein and fibre than a standard crisp with less saturated fat. A smart choice if you want a salty snack that's doing more for you nutritionally.

Waitrose No 1 hand-cooked pecorino and summer truffle crisps
Health rating 2/5

The ingredients list is long, with multiple flavourings and processing aids as well as a high fat content. One to avoid — or eat in small portions.

Sausage rolls

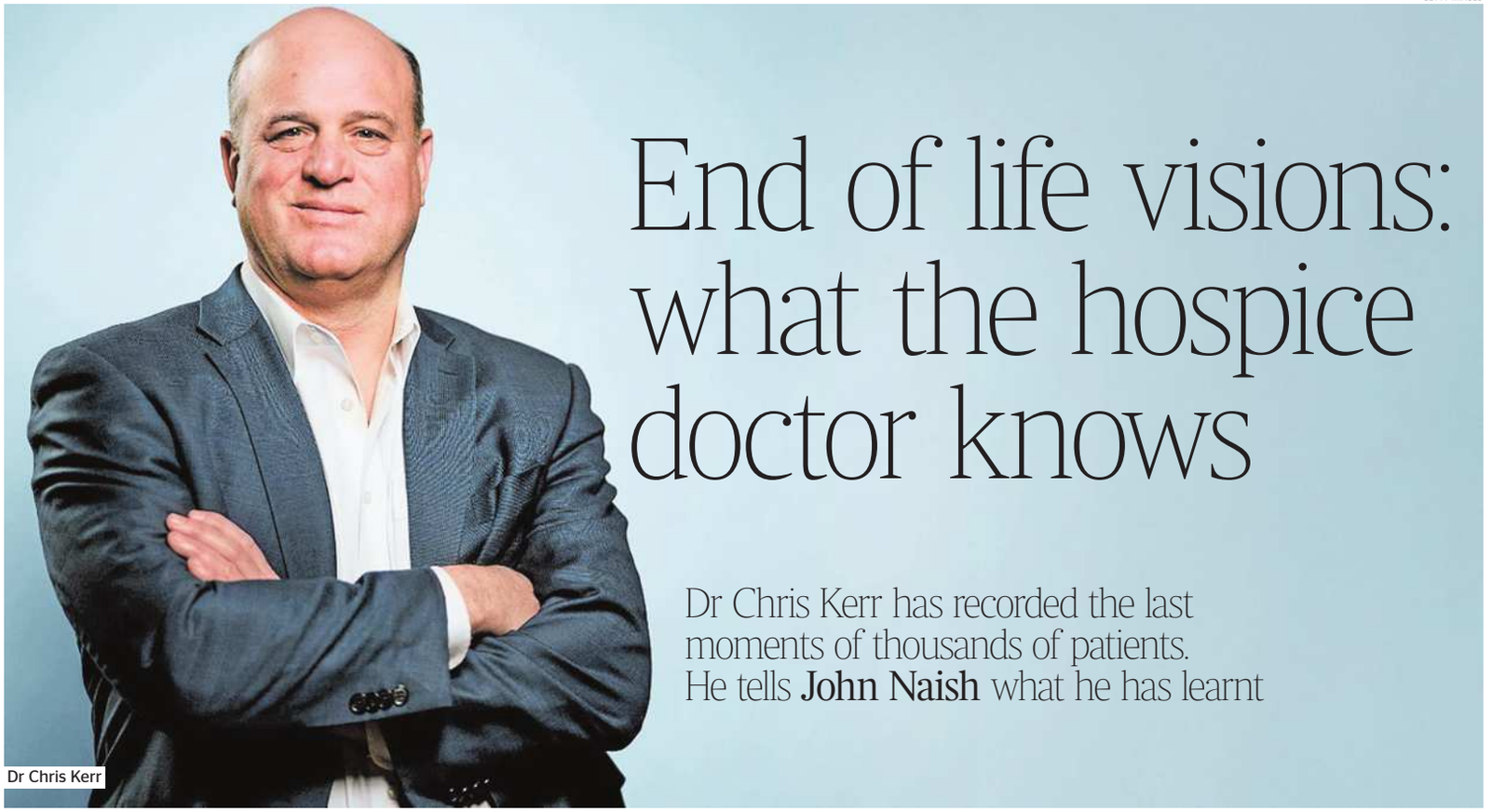
M&S Plant Kitchen no pork sausage roll
Health rating 2/5

Onion and mushroom are just 13 per cent of the filling, with palm oil, maltodextrin (an additive that raises blood sugar and disrupts the gut microbiome) and a stabiliser making up the rest of the ingredients. An occasional indulgence.

M&S Collection BBQ pork sausage rolls
Health rating 1/5

An all-butter pastry wrapped around bacon and pulled pork sits firmly in the "occasional treat" category, with saturated fat and salt typically high for this kind of product.

GETTY IMAGES



Dr Chris Kerr

End of life visions: what the hospice doctor knows

Dr Chris Kerr has recorded the last moments of thousands of patients. He tells **John Naish** what he has learnt

Many of us have heard of family members or friends having epiphanies at the end of their life. Conventional medicine has traditionally dismissed such phenomena as either hallucination or hysteria. But now these profound experiences are increasingly being recognised as common — and possibly essential — elements of the natural human process of dying.

A terminally ill woman cradles a vision of her long-lost baby; a dying war veteran is comforted by a spectral comrade; a critically ill doctor visits the afterlife; a toddler rouses briefly from an irreversible coma to comfort and reassure her parents. These are all scientifically recorded examples of visions and epiphanies experienced by people as they approach death.

The pioneering researcher in this field is the neurologist Dr Chris Kerr, the chief medical officer and chief executive officer of Hospice Buffalo, New York, whose Ted Talk "I see dead people: dreams and visions of the dying" has had 5.5 million views.

For nearly three decades Kerr has recorded thousands of what he calls patients' end-of-life dreams and visions (ELDVs). These vivid experiences, he says, are not mere hallucinations but a profound element of the dying brain's process that brings reassurance, reconciliation and resolution to relinquish their grip on life.

He first encountered the phenomenon as a 12-year-old, standing at the bedside of his dying father. Suddenly his dad told them that they had to hurry because it was time to head off for their annual fishing trip together — their strongest source of bonding.

Kerr sensed that his dad was in a different place or time, experiencing meaningful peace and joy. It didn't make sense when a priest said his dad was only delusional and ushered him away.

Decades later, when Kerr started working shifts at the hospice, he watched as Mary, 70, sat up in bed and began to joyfully cuddle a baby only she could see, cooing the name "Danny". Mary died soon afterwards.

> "Reconciliation and forgiveness seem common themes. They give the peace people need to let go of life

None of her family understood this. Then it transpired that early in life — without her surviving children's knowledge — Mary had lost baby Danny in childbirth. Now, through a vision, she and her first-born were finally reunited.

Kerr realised that not only were patients frequently experiencing profound end-of-life dreams and visions, but that the nurses accepted this as normal.

"The nurses could predict, by the growing frequency of these events, the patient's time of death," he says. "A strong sign is when patients start to see deceased loved ones. These final visions give patients profound solace."

In 2010 he began to research the phenomenon, interviewing thousands of dying patients about their visions, which they insist are nothing like normal dreams but are vivid and fully immersive. His mission has been to convince the medical profession of the crucial value of these patient experiences, and the need to support rather than dismiss them.

"The work has had little impact on the medical community," he says. "The economics of healthcare has no space for the doctor to be a comforter. The idea of the doctor knowing you from cradle to grave has gone. The science of medicine has outstripped its art. Nurses are the people closest to the patient nowadays."

In 2014 he published a study in the Journal of Palliative Medicine showing how nearly nine in ten dying patients report experiencing at least one ELDV. "About 10 per cent have distressing end-of-life dreams where traumatic events get replayed," he says. "These can be the most meaningful."

In one case John, a Second World War veteran who had left colleagues dying on the Normandy invasion beaches, had been tormented by survivor's guilt since. But at the end of his life he had a vision of himself back at Normandy, with a dead comrade saying they had come to fetch him home. "Reconciliation and forgiveness seem common themes. They give people the peace they need to let go of life," Kerr says.

In another of his recorded cases, Sierra, a young mother in her twenties, could not accept her terminal diagnosis until her deceased grandfather visited her in an ELDV to tell her that he was proud of her and that it was OK to let go.

"I am awestruck by the way that patients are united with the most important people in their lives emotionally and developmentally," Kerr says. "Often the encounters are with people they lost in childhood. This means that we don't leave this life alone but with a parent, sibling, deceased child or beloved pet."

More mysterious still, perhaps, is another death-related experience that scientists are beginning to take seriously called terminal lucidity. This involves long-unconscious terminally ill patients briefly rallying and communicating happily with medics, family and friends, then dying shortly afterwards. These patients often have prolonged and irreversible brain deterioration from dementia, strokes or brain cancers.

In 2010 a University of Southampton survey of nursing home caregivers in the journal Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics found that 79 per cent said they had witnessed patients who had been in deep comas suddenly rouse and say their goodbyes before dying.

It even happens in very young children. Two years ago a study in the Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease detailed the case of a three-year-old girl dying from an autoimmune condition that had destroyed her organs. After a fortnight's unresponsiveness she suddenly roused and began talking with her parents, which they and the bedside nurse described as "like a miracle". She spoke of her impending death and reassured loved ones of the need not to be concerned about her. She also seemed to be communicating with people who were not visible to others. After several hours she asked to "go to bed" and returned to her comatose state. After 48 hours she died peacefully of cardiac arrest in her parents' arms.

As the study says, "Children so young would not be expected to have the cultural conditioning or developmental capacity to understand the concepts of death and dying, nor be aware of the emotional impact of their impending death upon their parents."

Kerr says that terminal lucidity may, in common with ELDVs, involve the dying patient's brain reviving deeply embedded abilities and powers of recall. "In the dying state, memories become unlocked and patients are struck by incidents and encounters to which they might not have had access in previous everyday life," he says. "The same sort of revival may occur in terminal lucidity."

Near-death experiences (NDEs) — a well-reported phenomenon where patients revived from being clinically dead recall experiences such as soaring up to heaven, watching their entire life flash past or hovering over their body — are very different, Kerr says.

"With ELDVs people don't leave their bodies, there's no big reveal of an afterlife, no big subsequent change in philosophy or lifecourse," he says. "I have never had a patient experience an ELDV, then wake up and ask, 'What does it all mean?' If you encounter your deceased child you don't need anyone to interpret the experience for you."

Kerr cheerfully declares he has no explanation for any of these phenomena. "I love the idea that we don't know. With ELDVs I revere the fact that they seem to be beyond our grasp to understand. You can't show love on a brain scan or in a petri dish. These phenomena are like love, they take care of us.

"What's striking with ELDVs is that while people are physically lessening, they are growing emotionally and spiritually, gaining understanding and insight thanks to these experiences, as a process of learning and letting go."

I admit it — I am a competitive grandparent. Here's what I do

Rivalry can cause family tension even for Julia Samuel, a psychotherapist and grandmother to ten

When I mention grandparent rivalry to friends or clients, people often lower their voice and say: "I thought it was only me." We rarely admit it because it feels childish. Grandparents are supposed to be fonts of wisdom — endlessly generous, grateful and above competition. Yet it's hard not to keep silent score: who gets more weekends, more Christmases, more of those precious everyday moments, making it real, painful and understandably difficult to talk about.

As a mother to four children and grandmother to ten, ranging in age from 2 to 19, I admit I regularly feel the pull and push of competition for my grandchildren's love, time and attention with my four other sets of grandparents-in-law.

Sometimes I see that "the other grandparents" invent better games than I do or come up with more original ideas for a day out. Both press my rivalry button because I want my grandchildren to carry those memories of me in their bodies. I felt that particular squeezy, tight feeling in my chest when another grandparent heard important family news before I did or came up with a brilliant idea that I wished I had thought up. It surprised me. It was unwelcome. I know love is not finite or a zero-sum game. As a psychotherapist I have spent 35 years helping families to understand relationships, yet there I was: upset. Here's how I got over it.

Remember: grandparent rivalry is rarely just about grandchildren

I am the youngest of five, so family rivalry is a familiar feeling. The competition for love, time and attention was something I grappled with as a child and remember now at 66.

Yet while we expect siblings to compete, compare and hope to become the favourite, I did not expect a similar dynamic to emerge in any other relationship. Turns out I was wrong. Grandparent rivalry is rarely only about what was happening with my grandchildren in the present — it often wakes old feelings that have lain dormant for decades.

We all carry emotional templates from childhood: whether we felt seen, overlooked or cherished. The feeling in my chest was not really about who heard the news first. It was an echo of old pain. Underneath grandparent rivalry sits a deeply human longing to know we still matter and still belong.

GARETH IWAN JONES FOR THE TIMES

Julia Samuel with five of her grandchildren

> "Grandchildren shouldn't be responsible for making grandparents feel equally loved

Family ties can't always be equal — don't allow resentment to grow

Many children have four active grandparents, sometimes step-grandparents too. I have heard families describe themselves as Grandparent A-stream and Grandparent B-stream. One side may spend more time with the children. Sometimes that reflects logistics. Sometimes it reflects a genuine imbalance. Some grandparents feel pushed to the edge of family life, excluded from birthdays, school events and ordinary weekends. Unequal access can painfully become confused with unequal love, even when that is not the intention.

Research consistently shows that maternal grandmothers tend to have the closest relationships with grandchildren, while paternal grandparents often have less contact. Psychologists believe several factors explain this. Mothers still organise more of family life, maintain kinship ties and arrange childcare. Children often spend more time with the maternal side of the family from birth. Geography, work patterns, divorce and remarriage shape these relationships too.

For many men of my generation work consumed much of their children's early years. Grandchildren can offer a second chance: an opportunity to play cards, catch a ball and be more openly affectionate this time around. When that opportunity feels restricted the hurt can run deep.

Competition costs the grandchildren — what's your part in it?

If you feel your grandchildren are closer to their other set of grandparents, ask yourself a difficult question: what part might I play in it? That is not about blame, it is about curiosity. Relationships have two sides.

Do my adult children feel accepted when they are with me? Do they feel criticised, indebted or that they can never quite get it right? Or do they leave feeling lighter, understood and welcomed? We naturally gravitate towards the people who make us feel good about ourselves. Sometimes the smallest shift in how we respond can open the door to greater closeness.

The difficulty begins when adults turn those feelings into competition. Grandchildren should never carry the responsibility to make grandparents feel equally loved. They need the freedom to form different relationships with different people. One grandparent may invent stories, another bake cakes (something I always imagine I will do one day but never do), another simply sits and listens. Each relationship is unique. Together they enrich a child's life.

If you are the parent in this scenario, remember you hold the keys to the grandparent-grandchild relationship. When you can, include both sides of the family, equalise time where possible and stay connected with your parents and parents-in-law as well as your children.

Accept that your role will evolve

Grandparenthood is another developmental stage. Like every stage before it, it asks us to let go of one identity and grow into another. We stop making the decisions and start supporting the people who do. Our adult children decide where Christmas happens, how birthdays unfold, what routines work for their family and how they want to parent. That shift can bruise our sense of importance if we expect our role to stay the same.

The paradox is that the more respectfully we accept our adult children's authority, the more influence we may gain. When parents feel trusted rather than judged, they invite us in. Grandchildren flourish when the adults around them co-operate rather than compete.

When I can be my wise self I recognise that my grandchildren do not love one grandparent less because they love another more. I know abundance, not scarcity, is good for everyone. I no longer need to compete for their love. I can simply love them.

I hope that years from now my grandchildren remember less whether I built the tallest Lego tower and more how they felt with me. That they felt seen. That they felt my delight in them. That they knew they were loved for exactly who they are.

Grandparent rivalry: do's and don'ts

First, the do's. Notice when old feelings from your own childhood return — they are not facts about the present. Be honest but kind; tell your adult children when you miss your grandchildren before resentment can grow. Celebrate the different relationship each grandparent offers and focus on connection over comparison.

Now, the don'ts. Try not to keep score over who saw the children most often. Don't compete with presents, treats or extravagant outings and never ask grandchildren who they love most. Avoid criticising your adult children's parenting if you want to stay emotionally close. Crucially, don't confuse access with love – they are not the same.

Grab your binoculars! The top

It's the perfect time to see dolphins, seals and puffins, if you're lucky. Emily Sargent knows the best clifftops and coves to visit

There has been excellent news for the UK's coastal wildlife this summer. In July a rare young puffin, or puffling, was spotted peeping out from a cliff in Dorset — the first time in 30 years that one had been sighted at Purbeck, home to the last breeding colony on the south coast of England. Orcas, dolphins and seals have been seen in greater numbers too.

The summer months are a wonderful time to go wildlife-spotting, when brightly coloured wildflowers bloom on clifftops, dolphins are frequently sighted curving through the waves and migrating birds begin to arrive after their long journeys across the sea.

From boat trips to secluded islands to wild, windswept beaches and guided snorkel safaris, we've rounded up 20 of the best nature reserves to visit now for rare and wonderful wildlife.

Skomer Island Pembrokeshire

What to spot Grey seals, manx shearwaters, butterflies

It may be only a 20-minute boat ride from the Welsh mainland but the island of Skomer feels like a remote and magical spot on which to spend a day. By early August the site's famous puffins have largely departed, but it remains home to the world's largest breeding colony of Manx shearwaters. Fulmars, kittiwakes, gulls and choughs patrol the cliffs, while butterflies including meadow brown, small copper, dark green fritillary, peacock and painted lady flit between the swaying grasses. The surrounding seas are a haven for harbour porpoises and dolphins. Towards late summer grey seal pups will begin appearing along the island's rocky shores, making it a particularly wonderful time to visit.

Details welshwildlife.org

Montrose Basin Angus

What to spot Ospreys, oystercatchers

From late summer Montrose Basin becomes a haven for migrating and wintering wildlife. Look out for large gatherings of waders and wildfowl including redshanks, oystercatchers, lapwings, wigeons and pintails, as well as the arrival of thousands of pink-footed geese from Iceland and Greenland, their flocks forming magnificent displays. Ospreys may be seen passing through on migration, while seals and a variety of wetland birds can be spotted across the reserve's tidal mudflats, reedbeds and atmospheric saltmarsh.

Details scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Cardigan Bay Ceredigion

What to spot Bottlenose dolphins, harbour porpoises

You can often spot harbour porpoises, Atlantic grey seals and a huge variety of birdlife at Cardigan Bay. Bottlenose dolphins can be seen here throughout the year from the shore or on boat trips out on the clear turquoise water, with increased sightings from April until November (visitwales.com). The summer months bring seasonal visitors such as basking sharks and sunfish, which may be seen cruising through the bay's plankton-rich waters.

Details welshwildlife.org

Flamborough Cliffs Nature Reserve East Yorkshire

What to spot Minke whales, bottlenose dolphins

Flamborough Cliffs offer some of the UK's finest coastal wildlife spotting. Throughout late summer and into autumn the waters surrounding the dramatic promontory of Flamborough Head attract a huge array of seabirds and marine life, including skuas and shearwaters migrating along the coast, plus gannets, kittiwakes, fulmars, guillemots and razorbills combining to form a spectacular sight around the cliffs. Bottlenose dolphins can be spotted out to sea here, along with harbour porpoises, grey seals, and if you're really lucky, an elusive minke whale.

Details ywt.org.uk

Cemlyn Nature Reserve Anglesey

What to spot Curlews, redshanks

Cemlyn occupies a beautiful position on the north Wales coast, with a patchwork of habitats including a peaceful lagoon, rugged grasslands and a sweeping shingle ridge that attracts a wide variety of birds. While its famous summer tern colony begins to quieten soon as Sandwich, Arctic and common terns leave for migration, the approach of autumn brings new arrivals. Look out for curlews, redshanks, sanderlings and other migrating shorebirds alongside resident species such as grey seals and sleek bottlenose dolphins, often seen curving through the water offshore.

Details northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

Spurn National Nature Reserve East Yorkshire

What to spot Peregrines, roe deer, cormorants

This reserve — a long, narrow stretch of sand that reaches across the mouth of the River Humber — is a beautiful, wildlife-rich mosaic of beaches, saltmarsh, dunes, grassland, saline lagoons and sea buckthorn scrub. Look out for impressive flocks of migrating birds as well as dragonflies and butterflies that flit and dart through the grassy dunes and across pools, or visit early in the day for the chance of seeing roe deer. The saltmarsh and mudflats are home to wildfowl, wading birds and hunting merlins and peregrines, while summer brings an explosion of delicate wildflowers including pyramidal orchids and sea holly. Join guides at 10.30am on August 13 and 18 for Spurn Summer Sea Watch, a short wildlife walk along the clifftop, and keep an eye out for dolphins, harbour porpoises or even a minke whale (£8, book ahead).

Details ywt.org.uk

Flamborough Head, Yorkshire

Wembury Bay Devon

What to spot Sea anemones, starfish, dolphins

One of the country's richest coastal habitats, this beach is a brilliant place to explore rockpools, looking out for colourful sea anemones, starfish, crabs and small fish. The rugged coastline is home to many species of seabird, as well as dolphins offshore. Special events at the marine centre this summer include guided rockpool and snorkel wildlife safaris (Thursdays and Saturdays until the end of September), as well as sea watches at Wembury Point on the first Sunday of each month, scanning the water below for dolphins, porpoises and seals and recording your findings to help with conservation.

Details weburymarinecentre.org

Allonby Bay Cumbria

What to spot Guillemots, gannets, thornback rays, coral

The golden sands and deep blue water of Allonby Bay is England's only coastal designated Highly Protected Marine Area, home to a hidden world of wonderful and rare marine life including brightly coloured anemones, soft coral, cuttlefish, plaice, skate, thornback rays and different species of sponge. The area supports plenty of birdlife too, including waders such as oystercatchers and curlews, seabirds such as guillemots and gannets, and is a pupping area for harbour porpoises in the summer.

Details cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk

Looe Island Nature Reserve Cornwall

What to spot Grey seals, cormorants, speckled wood and red admiral butterflies

The waters around Looe Island are teeming with life over the summer, supporting nesting seabirds such as cormorants, shags, oystercatchers and Cornwall's largest breeding colony of great black-backed gulls. Grey seals are regularly seen here, while wildflower meadows, scrub, woods and grassland are home to a dazzling array of moths and butterflies, including speckled wood, meadow brown, red admiral, silver-washed fritillary, and the hummingbird hawk-moth. Book a two-and-a-half-hour boat trip and tour of the island in advance (£22pp, looeseasafari.co.uk) and keep an eye on the Wildlife Trust's website for other special tours.

Details cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk

20 places for coastal wildlife

ALAMY; SHUTTERSTOCK; GETTY IMAGES

See dolphins in Cardigan Bay

Puffins nest on Skomer Island

Brownsea Island Dorset

What to spot Red squirrels, kingfishers, sika deer

Stretching over about 250 acres, this is a fantastic place for wildlife spotting, with two new bird hides positioned with fabulous views over the lagoon and woods, wetlands and reedbeds, home to sika deer, kingfishers and water rails. In the heart of Poole Harbour, Brownsea Island is one of the few places left in the UK where you might catch a glimpse of a red squirrel, with an estimated 250 living on the island, while the lagoon plays a vital role in providing a safe haven for overwintering birds including avocets, black-tailed godwits and large numbers of wildfowl. A 20-minute return foot ferry departs every half an hour from Poole Quay (£14.50, 10am-4pm daily, no pre-booking).
Details dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

Farlington Marshes Hampshire

What to spot Lapwings, dunlins, curlews, butterflies

One of the Wildlife Trust's oldest reserves, Farlington Marshes near Portsmouth is a stretch of coast that has become an internationally important place for populations of wading birds and wildfowl. During the summer months the site is a hotspot for warblers passing through; listen out for Cetti's, reed and sedge warblers chattering from the hedges and scrub, while lapwings, redshanks, meadow pipits and skylarks are busy out on the marsh as they settle down to breed. A two-and-a-half-mile walking route around the outer sea wall takes in views to Langstone harbour.
Details hiwwt.org.uk

Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve Lincolnshire

What to spot Seals, little egrets, marsh harriers

Known for its impressive views and the sheer scale and diversity of its wildlife, Gibraltar Point is a dynamic stretch of unspoilt coastline of sand dunes, saltmarsh, ponds and lagoons, home to a huge number of coastal wildflowers and birds. In summer, little terns can be seen fishing in the shallows, while skylarks are in full song above the purple haze of the saltmarshes. Later in the year huge whirling flocks of waders can be seen here, as well as birds of prey including hen harriers, merlins and owls.
Details lincstrust.org.uk

Kimmeridge Bay Dorset

What to spot Rainbow wrack, coralline seaweed, seals

The Wildlife Trust's Wild Seas information centre sits on a stretch of Dorset's Jurassic Coast here, offering the perfect starting point from which to explore the area's rockpools and ledges. The centre's snorkel trail (open until September) leads swimmers on a guided path through the mild, shallow waters of the bay through a variety of seabed habitats, looking for coral, seaweeds and colourful anemones. Species of fish that are frequently seen include connemara clingfish, large wrasse and Montagu's blennies, while seals and dolphins are occasionally spotted. Join a ranger on August 13 at 3pm for a guided nature walk at low tide (£6pp, book in advance).
Details dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

South Walney Nature Reserve Cumbria

What to spot Grey seals, peregrine falcons

There are wonderful views across Morecambe Bay from this shingle island reserve. The site is home to Cumbria's only grey seal breeding colony and the seals can be spotted throughout the year, although the best time to see them is at high tide. It's a fantastic place for birdwatching; in summer, nesting birds and returning migrants such as willow warblers, wheatears and Sandwich terns can be seen, while a little later in the year large flocks of migratory birds including curlews, redshanks and brent geese arrive. The reserve is home to barn owls, short-eared owls, peregrines, butterflies and many species of coastal wildflowers, such as viper's bugloss, yellow horned poppy and sea lavender.
Details cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay Kent

What to spot Oystercatchers, orchids

Summer is a magical time at this reserve, when oystercatchers and ringed plovers nest on the shingle beach and butterflies dance between the many rare species of wildflowers that grow among the dunes, such as lizard orchids and Deptford pink. Listen to the waves on the sand and shingle, take in views across the saltmarsh and look out for the Highland cattle and Konik horses that sometimes graze here. In the coming months you'll be able to spot seals too, along with large numbers of waterfowl and waders such as dunlins, sanderlings and grey plovers.
Details kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

Straidkilly Co Antrim

What to spot Red squirrels, Irish hares, pine martens

A small but important woodland reserve, Straidkilly is perched in a peaceful spot above the village of Glenarm. Summer is the best time to hear breeding birds such as blackcaps, willow warblers and chiff-chaffs chattering, and buzzards, sparrowhawks, long-tailed tits and bullfinches can be seen year-round. You may spot the delicate cryptic wood white butterfly or the silver-washed fritillary as well as meadow brown and ringlet. Stoats, red squirrels, Irish hares and pine martens live in the hazel woodland, and the picnic area is a perfect place to pause for lunch, with panoramic views across the Irish Sea to Scotland and regular sightings of harbour porpoises.
Details ulsterwildlife.org

Peninnis Head Nature Reserve Isles of Scilly

What to spot Meadow pipits, dolphins

The atmosphere at the end of Peninnis Head is otherworldly. Granite cliffs, tors and boulders are scattered among the heathland with impressive rock formations stacked out into the sea. It is a top spot for seeing birds on migration, including species such as wrynecks, wheatears and ring ouzels, along with breeding birds such as stonechats and meadow pipits. In the winter months this is one of the best places in the country to see humpback whales and fin whales close to shore, as well as pods of common dolphins year-round.
Details ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve East Sussex

What to spot Marsh harriers, butterflies, barn owls

One of the largest and most important wildlife sites in England, the reserve's shingle beaches, saltmarches and woodland are home to more than 4,355 species of plants and animals, including 300 that are rare or endangered. August is the best month to spot wading birds including little stints, curlews, sandpipers and little ringed plovers, and there is a good chance of seeing a marsh harrier, hobby or barn owl. Take a wander through the fields for glimpses of yellow wagtails and wheatears, and keep an eye out for swifts that haven't yet left. Wildflowers carpet the ground, attracting many species of butterflies and bees.
Details sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

Cley and Salthouse Marshes Norfolk

What to spot Spoonbills, dragonflies

Wide open marshes, huge skies and sweeping beaches have made these marshes a sanctuary for birds and walkers alike over the years, and the vast swaying reedbeds come alive with wildlife in summer. Of the many birds seen here, the spectacular spoonbill with its long spatula-like bill is one of the most unusual sights. After an absence of more than 300 years the spoonbill started breeding regularly in the UK again in 2010, and birds from a nearby colony frequently visit Cley's pools to feed. Take a stroll along boardwalks to the reserve's bird hides and look out for dragonflies such as the keeled skimmer as they zip across the surface of the water.
Details norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

Seaton Cliffs Angus

What to spot Dolphins and wildflowers

Explore this site's spectacular red sandstone cliffs with their dramatic sea caves, stacks, blowholes and arches. The habitats support a rich variety of wildlife, including breeding seabirds such as fulmars and kittiwakes, wildflower-rich grasslands and many species of butterfly. Summer is the best time to see colourful coastal plants, such as thrift and sea campion, in bloom, while pods of dolphins can often be seen offshore.
Details scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Compiled by The Wildlife Trusts. For more information or to find your nearest reserve, visit wildlifetrusts.org.uk

Our friends have more sex than us

Dr Suzi Godson
Sex counsel

Q We made friends with a couple on holiday who were similar to us in all respects — mid-fifties, long-term married, empty nesters — but they clearly had a much more active sex life than we do. We thought everyone was happy with once a week (or so) by the time they reached our age/stage. Are we getting it wrong?

A Research consistently shows that declining sexual frequency is more strongly correlated with the duration of a relationship than the chronological age of the couple. Couples in their forties who have been together for decades have less sex, for example, than new lovers who are in their seventies.

In fact, it might reassure you to know that statistically after 30 years of marriage your median sexual frequency is actually higher than that of couples who are ten years younger than you. Sexual frequency data from the most recent British National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles established that the monthly sexual frequency for 35 to 44-year-olds was twice a month for women and three times a month for men, and 29 per cent had not had any sex at all in the past month.

Whether everyone is happy with that frequency is another matter, however. In the study, 50.6 per cent of women and 64.3 per cent of men who were either married or cohabiting said that they would prefer to have more frequent sex. You are already having more sex than couples who are ten years younger than you, though, so if you and your husband have always been happy with that, don't compare yourselves to a couple that you met on holiday.

You have arrived at a frequency that suits you for lots of different reasons. It sustains intimacy without putting either of you under pressure. It fits in with the demands of your daily life, and you don't need to plan or to schedule, because you know that sex is an established part of your weekly routine. You have created something that suits you and ultimately, when it comes to sex, the best metric isn't a number; it is how happy you both are.

The other truth that you seem to be overlooking is that no one can ever know what really happens in other people's sexual relationships. It is, however, fair to say that in the presence of strangers, or "holiday" friends, most couples will only choose to reveal the positive aspects of their life. They may on occasion open up about personal or familial challenges as a way of building empathy and connecting, but if they like you — and they want you to like them — they are probably not going to tell you about their bad habits, their bad relationship, or their bad debts.

Men's health
Train with Harry Jameson
My 30-minute 'bare minimum' workout
Join our fitness trainer in a 10-minute workout video
thetimes.co.uk/mensfitness

> Lots of people exaggerate how much sex they have; it can even be a turn-on

Lots of people exaggerate how much sex they have and what they say about their sex lives, and what actually happens behind closed doors doesn't always match up. For others, showing off about sex can even be a turn-on. Sexual narcissists like having sex, they like talking about sex, they like being admired for their sexual prowess and they like making people feel sexually inadequate. The couple you met on holiday may have had genuinely rampant sexual appetites, but for all you know, the thing that they were really getting off on was the vicarious thrill of broadcasting their sexual connection to you.

You sound as though you have a strong emotional and sexual relationship, so don't doubt yourselves. If you want to have more sex, your empty nest will give you more opportunities, but you really don't have anything to prove to anyone.

Send your questions to weekendsex@thetimes.com

Two-for-one cinema tickets at Everyman

Each Wednesday, Times+ members can enjoy a trip to Everyman with a friend. The perfect cinema experience with plush sofas, a full bar and great food in 49 locations across the UK. Discover our film critics' recommendations and reviews on the latest releases. **Visit thetimes.com/timesplus**

TIMES+ | EVERYMAN

T&Cs apply. Wednesdays only.

Stress, heartbreak, arthritis — how I rebuilt my health from scratch

The former glossy magazine editor Helen Johnston on the health challenges that changed her life

MICHAEL CLEMENT FOR THE TIMES; NICK CUNARD/SHUTTERSTOCK

Twenty-five years ago I was a high-flying magazine editor wearing designer labels, jetting off to fashion shows and interviewing prime ministers. Yet behind the glossy façade my life was about to crumble in a series of unexpected ways that brought me crashing down to earth.

The first blow came just 18 months after my first child was born, when my husband walked out on me. We had been married for four years and although we had been arguing, this came as a complete shock. Divorce was not part of my playbook — my parents were still together — so his leaving was a bolt from the blue.

Soon afterwards, I started to experience an intense pain in my hands and feet. I carried on, juggling work demands with raising my gorgeous little boy, but I knew something wasn't right.

What started as a constant ache in my fingers and toes would turn into stabbing pains, eventually becoming full-body aches coupled with constant exhaustion. I consulted a specialist, who diagnosed me with psoriatic arthritis, an autoimmune condition that causes joint pain, stiffness and swelling, and drains you of energy. When she told me, I burst into tears.

It was such a shock — a lifelong arthritic condition, at 36. Only years later did I make the connection between my husband walking out and my diagnosis six months later. Now, I can absolutely understand the link between that incredible stress, the raised level of cortisol, and its impact on my system.

There is a strong genetic predisposition to psoriatic arthritis, but I believe my lifestyle also contributed. Besides the stress of my marriage breakdown I had been burning the candle at both ends, drinking too much champagne and worrying about magazine sales. I wasn't eating junk food as such, but my diet was full of white refined flour: cereal, sandwiches, pasta.

The NHS put me on heavy-duty drugs, methotrexate and sulfasalazine, which didn't really work for me. I was in constant pain so I was also put on equally heavy-duty painkillers.

Despite the diagnosis, I kept working hard. Through the Nineties I'd grafted my way up the ranks of Marie Claire. I became deputy editor of Cosmopolitan in 2001, then editor of Bliss, then New Woman, and was on the launch team of Grazia in 2005.

Working in the world of "glossies" was a magical experience. I'd jet off to fashion shows in Milan and Paris, decked out by the fashion team in exquisite designer labels. There were parties, launches, dinners, and generous gifts from advertisers; a Moschino jacket, a Miu Miu handbag, enough pots of Crème de la Mer to last a lifetime.Those women's magazines were a wonderful mix of glamour and seriousness and we ran vitally important health campaigns, from breast cancer awareness to mental health support, and shone a light on domestic violence. I interviewed Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and David Cameron as I'd regularly visit No 10 along with readers to discuss these issues with the PM at the time. It was exciting to have access to the corridors of power.

Yet amid the gloss of the evening gowns, catwalks, celebrities and photoshoots, I was struck by the sheer volume of people worrying about their weight and wellbeing. We were witnessing a growing mental health crisis and a rise in obesity and type 2 diabetes. Through the sparkles, feathers and sequins of that glittering world, that's what resonated and — given my own health issues — stuck with me.

Three years after my diagnosis, when I was 39, I met the man who is now my husband. We wanted to have a baby so we went through IVF, and I was very lucky to have my second child at 43, a miracle and a joy, in 2010.

In pregnancy, the symptoms of my condition abated. But after I gave birth they flooded back with a vengeance. I was put on new drugs, and had to inject myself once a week.

I didn't want to be medicated, but when I asked the rheumatologist about diet and lifestyle fixes she was dismissive. "Oh yes, people try them but they always come back wanting the drugs," she told me. I'm certainly not suggesting that medication isn't necessary, or effective, for many, but I really believe there is so much we can do for the prevention and even the reversal of many conditions.

By my fifties, I'd moved out of glossy magazines and was working for an agency with clients like Holland & Barrett and Superdrug, so health was still a focus for me. I'd transformed my diet; instead of toast, breakfast was now yoghurt, nuts, seeds, berries and cacao. As my diet improved, I found I was able to space out my medication from weekly, to fortnightly, to monthly injections. I started to think, what could I do to help others?

Helen Johnston today and, above, when deputy editor of Cosmopolitan in 2004

I decided to train as a naturopathic nutritionist, a complementary health practitioner who uses whole and organic foods as medicine. I loved it, and after three years qualified as a practitioner. Working with clients reinforced what I'd seen with magazine readers: a population desperately needing help, whether for thyroid, premenstrual syndrome, gut or weight issues. That's when I came up with the idea of developing a range of seed and botanical mixtures to make increasing your nutrient intake really simple. Seeds contain enough protein, fibre and nutrients to keep you feeling full enough that you won't end up reaching for a biscuit mid-morning. They're rich in B vitamins, iron, magnesium, and omega-3s. I consider them part of an overall healthy lifestyle.

I come from a farming background in Norfolk. My grandparents were farmers and after working in agriculture my dad bought an arable farm; we grew onions, potatoes, carrots, sugar beet, all commodity crops. You're told to spray them with all sorts, which we did. It was only after my father died, and times changed, that my mother began to apply the principles on the farm that she'd always used in her garden; regenerative farming — essentially how people farmed 100 years ago. Things like growing companion crops, integrating livestock so the manure helps the land, and not ploughing your fields, leaving the microbes in the soil intact, giving resilience to the plants.

I began experimenting with growing seeds on our own farm and created four blends — for gut health, energy, focus and immunity — made with a combination of seeds including pumpkin, quinoa and sunflower, and botanicals such as maca, nettle, lemon balm and camomile; herbs with amazing properties that have been used for millennia.

I use ingredients from ayurvedic and Chinese traditional medicine too: turmeric, ginger and black pepper for their anti-inflammatory properties, and Korean ginseng to help build resilience.

I wanted to make them super-versatile, so they can go with sweet or savoury food — you can add them to yoghurt, porridge, smoothies, soup and salad, or stir them into a pasta sauce. It turns out that seeds and herbs on ice cream are delicious. I finally launched Sucseed last September, and we're now stocked in Selfridges.

Now 59, I'm symptom-free and not taking any medication. I'm not pretending I've cured my autoimmune disease from seeds and herbs — if I could, I'd be basking on my superyacht. But eating well and making lifestyle changes, including managing stress and improving sleep, has undeniably helped to improve my health. Actively helping other people to do the same feels incredible.

sucseed.life

As told to Anna Maxted

How to cook Mexican food at home — the chef's top tips

This cuisine doesn't have to be limited to tacos and fajitas. Santiago Lastra shares his recipes with Hannah Evans

REBECCA DICKSON

Mushroom costra

Ask any Brit who has been to Mexico whether they liked the food and you'll be forced to listen as they disappear down a culinary rabbit hole, reeling off their favourite margaritas, describing the smell of warm corn tacos or gushing over the first time they tried mole and aguachile. Ask them if they ever make Mexican food back in their homes and you'll probably get a more simple answer: "Not really." And no, those bright-yellow Old El Paso fajita kits don't count.

"There are two reasons," explains Santiago Lastra, who is from Cuernavaca just outside Mexico City, and is the chef behind the UK's only Michelin-starred Mexican restaurant: KOL, in London. "Firstly, it is the ingredients. The citrus, the chillies, some of the vegetables, the corn. They are not as easy to get here. You have to buy them online or find a replacement." The second? "Mexican cooking is a bit complicated sometimes. The methods and techniques aren't usually something you can do quickly or at home here. I found that I wasn't cooking much Mexican food at home for the same reason."

That's why Lastra has written his debut recipe book, *Mexican Soul: A New Style of Cooking*, with the noble goal of making his home country's cuisine more accessible around the world. Rather than an exhaustive encyclopaedia of where to buy authentic imported ingredients or how to make the best salsa macha (though there's a recipe for that), most of the pages are dedicated to a style of cooking Lastra calls "Mexican soul cooking" — simpler techniques and recipes with ingredients that you can pick up in the supermarket.

"Mexican cooking can overwhelm people and feel strange. I wanted to use ingredients that everyone in the world had in their cupboard: olive oil, paprika, nuts, honey, cayenne pepper. And absolutely everyone from England to Australia has potatoes." There is a recipe for Mexican meatballs (albondigas) and mushroom al pastor, trout tostadas and even a prawn cocktail recipe.

Santiago Lastra

However, there are still some rules that need to be followed. The best way to understand Mexican cooking, Lastra says, is to look at a map. The country is roughly eight times bigger than the UK and made up of 31 states. As you travel through them, the food changes. There is more to Mexican cooking than tacos and quesadillas.

"I want people to understand the regions of Mexico in the same way they understand the regions of Italy," Lastra says. For example, in dry, hot Yucatan there are strong indigenous roots and an abundance of citrus. "Here the people speak slowly and cook slowly," he says. "They mix sour orange juice with achiote seeds and use it to marinate pork, which is then placed in a hole in the ground and covered with leaves. After many hours they will grind some habanero chillies, lime and salt and that's the salsa. It is served with corn tortillas and is the most traditional ceremonial dish of the area: cochinita pibil." Meanwhile, down in Oaxaca, the most famous dish is a sauce called mole. "And it's not just one mole, but seven moles. And it's not just seven moles... everyone has their own recipe."

In his book, Lastra has broken the country down into nine key regions, broadly based on how gastronomy developed over time. Baja California, he says, is home of the fish taco and has been influenced by the immigration of Japanese fishermen in the Fifties and Sixties. The north, on the other hand, is mostly arid and best known for simple ranch cooking. "Histories of war, cultural exchanges and developments, climate and industry all play their part in establishing a cuisine. But in Mexico, there is a through line of flavour and pleasure that underscores it all."

Santiago Lastra's rules for Mexican food at home

- There must always be something spicy on the table.
- Tortillas must always be warm (and handmade tortillas are always best).
- Mexican food is meant to be generous. Where two can eat, three can eat.
- How to build a taco: tortilla as the base, then protein on top, then onions and herbs, then salsa.
- Tacos are grabbed with the hands and eaten in two or three bites.
- You can never have just one taco (the right portion is three to five tacos per person).
- Raw fish goes on a tostada, not in a taco.
- No spices are to be used in salsas (turmeric, cumin, cardamom).
- Good salsas and guacamole don't come from a tin — they're homemade.
- Sweet-sour sauces are not for tacos (ketchup, barbecue, Korean sauce, soy sauce etc).
- Aguachiles should be spicy.
- Ceviches should be sour.
- Everything tastes better with lime.

Choriqueso

Choriqueso

This pan of melted cheese and spicy chorizo is served hot with corn or flour tortillas to scoop up the delicious mixture. The most traditional choices for choriqueso are semi-soft melting cheeses like Oaxaca, asadero, or Mexican manchego, which have a mild, buttery tang that pairs perfectly with the bold spice of the chorizo. For this recipe, I've used a blend of emmental and mozzarella for extra depth and creaminess.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 20ml vegetable oil
- 300g fresh cooking chorizo
- 200g emmental
- 150g fresh mozzarella
- 200g pre-grated mozzarella
- 6 large flour tortillas
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 30g coriander leaves

Method

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat (you want to render the fat slowly) and fry the chorizo for 8-10 min until it starts to fall apart. Remove from the heat.
2 Preheat the grill to high or preheat the oven to 190C/gas 6.
3 Combine all the cheeses and the chorizo with your hands and place on an ovenproof plate or in a baking dish. Place under the grill for 7 min or bake in the oven for 10-15 min until the cheese has melted and is caramelised on the top.
4 Heat a large dry frying pan over a high heat. Warm the tortillas by frying them for 10-30 seconds on each side until golden but without drying them out. Wrap in a cloth to keep them warm.
5 Remove the choriqueso from the oven and finish with the onion and coriander, then serve hot with the warm tortillas.

Mushroom costra

Costra, meaning "crust" in Spanish, is a classic dish from the north and centre of Mexico that's traditionally made with tender cuts of beef and finished with a melted crust of semi-hard cheese (usually Chihuahua or manchego mixed with Oaxaca for texture). The cheese is grated

on the plancha grill and allowed to melt and crisp up, and is then draped over the meat. Here, I have substituted the steak for mushrooms.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 6 portobello mushrooms
- 200g emmental, grated
- 12 flour tortillas
- 50g coriander or chervil, stalks included
- ¼ onion, finely chopped
- 100g salsa verde
- 3 lemons, cut into wedges
- Vegetable oil, for drizzling

Method

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/gas 7.
2 Put the mushrooms on a baking tray, drizzle with oil and season with sea salt, then cook in the oven for 20 min.
3 Remove the mushrooms from the oven and, while still hot, flatten them with a rolling pin, rolling them out as you would roll out dough.
4 Divide the cheese into 25g balls.
5 Heat a dry frying pan over a medium heat and cook the tortillas for 30 seconds each side until slightly bubbling. Be careful not to dry them out. Wrap in a cloth to keep them warm.
6 Now put one portion of the cheese into the same pan and spread it out to create a circle about the same size as one of the mushrooms. Cook gently until slightly melted, then place a mushroom on top. Once the cheese has caramelised a little — about 5 min over a medium heat — and is golden on the bottom, remove it from the pan and set aside. Repeat with the remaining cheese and mushrooms.
4 Place the cheesy mushrooms on the hot tortillas and finish with coriander, onion, salsa and a squeeze of lemon.

> “Mexican cooking can overwhelm people. I aim to use ingredients that everyone has in their cupboard

Camotes

Camote comes from the Nahuatl word *camotli*, the pre-Columbian name for sweet potato. Consumed in sweets and desserts across Mexico, they are famously sold as street food in Mexico City, where vendors (*camoteros*) push heavy metal carts through the neighbourhoods from late afternoon into the night. The carts release steam through a pipe to produce a distinct, high-pitched whistle that announces their arrival. Traditionally, these wood-steamed sweet potatoes are served hot with sweetened condensed milk and cinnamon. I've given this classic recipe a twist by cooking the sweet potato in butter and topping it with a coffee-infused cream.

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 4 sweet potatoes
- 120g unsalted butter
- 280g brown sugar

For the coffee cream

- 15g brown sugar
- 50ml freshly brewed espresso
- 100ml whipping cream

Method

1 Preheat the oven to 190C/gas 6.
2 Place the potatoes on individual sheets of foil. Dot each one with 30g of butter and sprinkle with the sugar. Close up the foil to make parcels, place on a baking sheet and bake for an hour.
3 Combine the sugar and espresso in a small saucepan and heat until the sugar dissolves. Set aside and allow to cool to room temperature.
5 Whip the cream until soft peaks form and then stir in the cooled coffee.
6 Remove the sweet potatoes from the oven and serve hot with the cream.

The 12 best wines to buy at Aldi and Lidl now

Jane MacQuitty

Why shop for wine at Aldi and Lidl? Easy question. It's for good wine at very keen prices. As readers know, the selections at the German discounters have improved dramatically over the past few decades, and with careful selection it's entirely possible to fill your summer wine rack to bursting point with decent bottles.

It's no secret that the duo keep prices down by buying Brobdingnagian quantities of a limited range of wines. What continues to grate is the long queues, the dusty stores, the lack of checkouts and bags, no click and collect, plus the shops' haphazard approach to stacking shelves, with bottles often in the wrong place. However, with oodles of rock bottom-priced classic and not so classic wines on offer, including their sub-£4 wines of the week, these are minor grumbles and, frankly, what most wine drinkers expect from no-frills stores.

Aldi continues to stock a much better range than Lidl, its superior Specially Selected wines denoted by a dinky neck label that's hard to spot. Never mind. Shop here for fizz (always an Aldi strength) — not the evil Nicolas de Montbart and Veuve Monsigny champagnes but crémant (see best buy) and prosecco. Portugal's Animus Douro and Mimo Moutinho regional reds have long been firm favourites with readers, and the Baron Amarillo Spanish wines are always worth investigating, with the rioja and the new albariño getting my thumbs-up.

Given Aldi's share of the grocery market, No 4 after Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda, it's a shame there aren't more £10-plus wines on sale here, such as the delicious Château Les Trois Manoirs cru bourgeois claret — an excellent wine stocked here in the past, but sadly not available now.

Over at Lidl, from August there will be just four "wine tours" a year, highlighting labels from different countries or regions that all have a seasonal bent, and stocking more of those bottles. There is still a lot of dross on Lidl's shelves alongside their better Deluxe range but from time to time there are stonkingly good Antipodean and other bargains here.

My top picks right now are the awesome classic regional Aussies, a Clare Valley riesling and a Coonawarra cabernet (see best buys). Eastern Europe is another Lidl highlight, especially Hungary, as are the Cepa Lebrel riojas and the just-landed Varzea do Marão vinho verdes, £2 cheaper here than elsewhere. Surprisingly Lidl's fizz is worth checking out, with everything from decent enough prosecco to tasty Bissinger champagne — who knew?

Aldi's top six

2024 Chassaux et Fils Côtes du Rhone Villages, France ***14 per cent, £7.69***
Tuck into this superior, warm, savoury, thyme and black pepper-scented southern Rhône blend of grenache and syrah.

Specially Selected Crémant de Loire Brut, France ***12 per cent, £8.99***
Bursting with lively lemony fruit and a blast of yellow apple on the finish, this is a crowd pleasing champagne-method star.

2024 Pierre Jaurant Viognier, France
12.5 per cent, £5.49
Delightfully cheap and utterly authentic, with all the honeysuckle and uplifting, ripe, peachy yet zesty fruit you'd expect.

Pierre Jaurant Bordeaux, France
13 per cent, £5.49
Overflowing with mature, cedar, plum and bay leaf-scented fruit, this is mostly merlot topped up with cabernet sauvignon.

2025 Specially Selected Picpoul de Pinet, France
12 per cent, £7.99
The sparky picpoul grape is summer in a glass and Aldi's is one of the best, with masses of dry, citrussy, herby fruit.

2025 Baron Amarillo Rias Baixas Albariño, Spain
12.5 per cent, £8.99
Ignore the blue bottle and concentrate on the elegant, greeny-white wine with its samphire and lemon citrus fruit.

Lidl's top six

2025 Deluxe Riesling, Clare Valley, Australia
11.5 per cent, £8.49
This is a thrilling, tongue-tingling, leafy, lime zest-licked, warm-weather aperitif star, and a perfect match with seafood.

2025 Allini Asti Spumante, Italy
7 per cent, £4.65
Sploshed ice cold over a bowl of summer berries, Allini's sweet, floral, musky, grapey fizz turns a simple summer spread into an occasion.

2025 Varzea do Marão Vinho Verde Rosé, Portugal
8.5 per cent, £5.99
Varzea's spritzy pink vinho verde is a useful addition to the summer table because of its crisp fruit and low alcohol.

2025 Cahors Malbec, France
12.5 per cent, £8.99
Less tannin and heft than the traditional Gallic and Argentinian versions-makes this bright, light, curranty red a whizz with meaty salads.

2025 Deluxe Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon, Australia
13.5 per cent, £7.29
The bold cedary spice you would expect from the Aussies' answer to the Médoc, plus a ripe, seductive, black-fruited finish, it's a Lidl must-buy.

2025 Deluxe Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand
12 per cent, £8.99
With extra dollops of mouthwatering passion fruit, lime and lemon-grass pizzazz, this is tailor made for fish and chips.

MONEY

4.50%

AER P.A. (VARIABLE)*

***4.41% gross per annum (variable). Includes a 1.64% bonus (AER) fixed for 12 months.**

Moneyfacts EXCELLENT
SAGA Easy Access Savings Account 4.50%
20.07.26

Moneyfacts Best Buy
SAGA Easy Access Savings Account 4.50%
20.07.26

WHY SETTLE FOR LESS?

SWITCH UP YOUR SAVINGS

- ✓ **More rewarding** - Earn double the rate the big banks are offering.
- ✓ **24/7 easy access** - Take out your money instantly with no penalties.
- ✓ **Always here for you** - Talk to our UK-based team if you need support.

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF SAGA

1951

SAGA EASY ACCESS SAVINGS ACCOUNT
To open your account, scan the QR code or visit
saga.co.uk/moneytimes

Interest paid monthly. UK residents only. Designed for people over 50, in partnership with NatWest. Correct as at 20th July 2026. Available to new customers only.

SAGA
Experience is everything

NSA-PF0584b

APPEAL SHADING

BESPOKE BLINDS & AWNINGS

Create the perfect space for outdoor living

- Precision German engineered awnings
- Remote control operation
- Smart sensors extend the awning when the sun is out
- Dimmable LED lighting creates the perfect ambience
- Infrared heating keeps you warm into the night
- Up to 26 square metre area
- **New** Pergola Top – a fully retractable sunshade for your pergola or glass room.

For a colour brochure call **0800 975 5757**, visit **appealshading.co.uk** or scan the **QR code** for more info

Also available: smart blinds & insect screens

The normal sized walk-in bath you can lie down or shower in!

The **Simplicity Walk-In Bath** is an elegant solution to your bathing difficulties. Stylishly designed with clever features to make bathing a safe and simple pleasure once more, a Simplicity Walk-In-Bath can transform your bathroom, and your life, in just one day!**

- Can be colour matched to your existing suite
- Option to add hydro-therapy spa jets
- Easy access, 100% watertight door
- Optional powered seat
- Wide, roomy interior

FITTED IN JUST 1 DAY**

MADE IN THE UK

4.9/5 ★★★★★ REVIEWS.io

For more details & a FREE brochure call **0800 316 9798** (Ask for ext. 66122)

To learn more scan the QR code or visit **www.nationwide-mobility.co.uk**

*Not in conjunction with any other offer. **Based on a straightforward fitting. Nationwide Mobility is a trading name of Aquability UK Ltd

Nationwide Mobility

Outside

For a splash of colour try a daisy — take your pick

Are the heatwaves turning your garden beige? Plant these classic blooms to inject some brightness, says Joe Swift

Deam's coneflower in a border

By this point in the summer many gardens can feel as though they have fizzled out, especially after the hot, dry weather. There is a specific term for this phenomenon: the August colour gap. It is self-explanatory. Your garden peaked with freshness and abundant colour in spring and early summer but has now turned dry, dormant and bleached out. As a result you've decided you're done for the summer and you're now simply waiting for those autumnal tones to kick in.

But it's too soon to think like that. One way to help combat the gap is to grow daisies. Those native to North America, such as black-eyed Susan and coneflower, are also classed as American prairie plants and work wonderfully alongside ornamental grasses in a loose, naturalistic style. Once established, some daisy species (especially those two) are drought-tolerant, which makes them a good choice considering the way British summers are heading.

Also, who doesn't love a daisy? Their open, honest flowers are easily accessible to pollinators, with the common characteristics being ray florets, petal-like structures arranged around a centre (*capitula*) of disc florets, where the small tubular flowers are clustered.

Black-eyed Susan (*rudbeckia*), coneflower (*echinacea*), sunflower (*helianthus*), shasta (*leucanthemum*), dyer's chamomile (*cota tinctora*) and sneezeweed (*helenium*) are all on my list of impactful summer daisies. There are also the more diminutive self-seeding Mexican fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*), which seeds into cracks, and the lovely tickseed (*coreopsis*), with its masses of small daisy-like flowers.

There is something wonderfully nostalgic about daisies, a stalwart of the cottage garden. Many of you will have memories of making daisy chains with the common lawn daisy (*Bellis perennis*) as a child. I hope parents still do this with their children, although I imagine there's probably an app to make a daisy chain virtually now. It's simply not the same. There are purists out there who say that daisies shouldn't be touched but in my view a few picked flowers won't kill the planet and, in this age

Caitlin Moran on How to be Hopeful

Join us for a brilliantly funny and uplifting evening as Times columnist **Caitlin Moran** hits the stage for the London instalment of her nationwide tour. In conversation with her friend and colleague – Times Radio presenter **Hugo Rifkind** – Caitlin will unravel the themes of her essential new book, *How to be Hopeful: A Year of Attempting to Feel Less Awful About the World.*

Thursday, September 17 | 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Bryanston Square, London, W1H 1PQ

TIMES Events
Book your tickets at **thetimes.com/events**

ELKE BORKOWSKI/GAP PHOTOS; ALAMY

of ever-present screens, children need to engage with nature more than ever.

You can plant the daisies I've suggested now, but it's not the ideal time so make sure they don't dry out — only in the autumn will they get an opportunity to really get their roots down. As a temporary solution to "the gap", you could buy some pots and place the daisies in beds, using the foliage of other plants to hide their containers. You could then plant them into the ground in autumn. These daisies will need watering even more, although it does mean that next year, just as you think things are fizzling out, they will save the day.

Know your daisies

Coneflowers The largest flowers, with pronounced rounded centres from which radiate horizontal or reflexed (downward-turned) petals. They come in whites, purples, rosy pinks, reds and oranges.

Sneezeweed Its common name was coined because its leaves were once used in snuff to make one sneeze out evil spirits. They produce smaller flowers with a pronounced central cone in a range of soft and golden yellows, oranges, reds and coppers.

Black-eyed Susan Distinct black centres and a colour palette of mainly yellows and orange-yellows.

Planting tips

Daisies require plenty of sun. They do well on most fertile garden soils, though once established many can cope with sustained dry periods. I would add plenty of organic matter when planting. Taller varieties may need staking. Every few years they should be lifted and divided in autumn or spring.

> "Daisies work wonderfully alongside ornamental grasses in a naturalistic style

Page 19

'We admired the vaulted ceiling of the chapel, relished its cool interior after the blazing heat of the day'

Jen and Sim Benson's good walk

Joe's favourite daisies

Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)

A tough species plant but beautiful and the one to try if you've had trouble with hybrids. An orange-brown centre with pinky-purple petals. A butterfly magnet! Height 1.5m, spread 45cm.

Tickseed 'Moonbeam' (*Coreopsis verticillata*)

A lovely light, airy plant with feathery foliage and soft yellow flowers to weave through borders. They usually deliver from July to September. Height 50cm, spread 50cm.

Corn chamomile (*Anthensis arvensis*)

A wildflower with classic yellow centres and white petals for meadow planting, but also loosens up a more ornamental border. Good on poor soil. Height 30cm, spread 30cm.

Purple coneflower 'White Swan' (*Echinacea purpurea*)

These look so good among my grasses. Orange-green centres are surrounded by drooping white petals with a green tinge, with a classic daisy appearance. Height 70cm, spread 45cm.

Deam's coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii*)

Good for dry weather once established. Flowers for a long period from August to October. Orange-yellow flowers and dark contrasting centres on a stocky plant. Height 60cm, spread 45cm.

Sneezeweed 'Potter's Wheel' (*Helenium*)

Deep crimson petals are edged in gold with dark brown central cones, which start in August and can keep going till autumn. Height 60cm, spread 40cm.

Sneezeweed 'Moerheim Beauty' (*Helenium*)

A reliable classic with large copper-red flowers and downward hanging petals, making the dark-brown centres even more prominent. Height 1.2m, spread 60cm.

Leucanthemum x *superbum* 'Banana Cream'

A yellow form with large lemon-yellow flowers that fade to white. Do well in borders and pots. They are long-flowering and make a long-lasting cut flower too. Height 50cm, spread 10cm.

Great coneflower (*Rudbeckia maxima*)

An impactful species with large waxy blue-grey leaves. The branching stems hold elegant flowers with a distinctive large pointed central cone. Does best on moisture-retentive soil. Height 1.5m, spread 50cm.

Can a rose ever be a wildflower?

At Sissinghurst wild roses abound, says Ann Treneman

Wildflower meadows are the garden trend that will not go away. When you think of one, the flowers that come to your mind probably include ox-eye daisies, bird's-foot trefoil, buttercups, cowslips, scabious, lady's bedstraw, wild carrot... the list goes on. But one plant that most people would not add in is a rose. That's about to change.

My former professor at the University of Sheffield, Nigel Dunnett, who died this year, was the founder of the seed-mix firm Pictorial Meadows and an expert on wildflower meadows. Last year, on Instagram, he posted: "I've long wanted to plant wild or species roses into meadows, and one of the best examples of doing this is in the orchard at Sissinghurst Castle gardens." This summer I finally made it to Sissinghurst to see what he was talking about.

I found myself standing with its head gardener, Troy Scott Smith, in its orchard, grass and flowers abuzz with bees. We were surrounded by fruit trees and, interspersed in the grass or climbing up trees, roses. It was a scene that felt not only romantic but timelessly so.

Sissinghurst has long been ahead of the trends when it comes to roses. Vita Sackville-West and her husband, Harold Nicolson, planted their first rose before they had even properly bought the house and (wrecked) garden in the 1930s. That was a Madame Alfred Carrière rose, whose offspring, from a cutting, still grows up the front wall of the estate's South Cottage. Sackville-West preferred old roses, which tend to flower only once a year and, in the garden borders, liked to plant them alongside flowers such as peonies and iris, which flowered either just before or just after them.

NATIONAL TRUST/MARIANNE MAJERUS

A pink climbing rose in the orchard at Sissinghurst Castle Garden

"Sissinghurst has long been ahead of the trends when it comes to roses

"She didn't care what it looked like in March or August," Scott Smith says, "because she wanted the concentration to be that big moment in June."

Sissinghurst's orchard meadow is an even more natural way of displaying roses. "When she first came, she found a rose growing here, in the grass. It was a Gallica. She named it Sissinghurst Castle, though it does have another name, Rose des Maures. That would have been a rose planted as part of the Elizabethan mansion. That might have given her the idea [of planting roses in the orchard]."

The orchard roses include climbers, ramblers and shrubs. As we arrive, a faint scent greets us from an untidy mound of *Rosa* 'Mulliganii' (which also covers the gazebo in the White Garden). Here it is allowed to be itself, the only supporting structure being one chestnut pole in the middle. It's a natural look. "They'll sprawl through the forest where they come from in China," Scott Smith explains. "Here, the stem is travelling along the ground but next year there will be a stem above that and it'll form layers, a mound, and we'll take away the [supporting chestnut] stick. It will be four metres wide, a lump, which is fine."

Other roses, such as a nearby Félicité-Perpétue, can be seen scrambling up a (very) gnarled tree. In some cases, the tree has died but the rose is still going strong. There has been a ten-year programme at Sissinghurst to return the orchard to its wild(er) and romantic past. First, yellow rattle was introduced to create some space in the grass and then seeds from a local wildflower specialist were strewn. The roses here will never be as large as those grown in the beds.

Scott Smith and his team have planted a significant number of roses to add to those that survive from Sackville-West's day. Scent is not necessarily a criterion for a wild rose, as they are often only seen from afar.

There is no deadheading but ideally they will have flowers that fall off easily and have good hips. They are rarely pruned.

"We don't want them to look too interfered with," he says. "We want them to look natural. The hips, you know, stay red for a long time, and then they start getting eaten by birds and the ones that are left just drop off onto the floor."

Not everyone has an orchard, of course, but you can still take part in this new era of roses by growing one in a more natural way.

Scott Smith suggests that a Gallica, which suckers true to type, would be a good one to start with. "The Gallicas are useful just to allow to run through meadows. And if you don't prune them, that's fine. Equally, if you chop them off with the mower, it doesn't matter. They'll just keep on coming back."

Vita Sackville-West's orchard roses

***Rosa* 'Mulliganii':** species rose, fragrant, single-flowered white rambler.
***Rosa* 'Complicata':** Gallica hybrid, shrub rose with large single bright pink flowers.
***Rosa* 'Félicité-Perpétue':** rambler with large clusters of pom-pom white and pink-tinged blooms.
***Rosa* 'Kew Rambler':** bred in 1912, pink rambler, musk scent, attractive orange-red hips.
***Rosa* 'Blush Rambler':** rambler with large clusters of small blush pink/white fragrant flowers.

TIMES Travel *Partner*

FOUR DAYS NOW FROM £799 per person

SAVE 10%* BOOK BY SEP 30

André Rieu, Maastricht

André Rieu in Maastricht by Eurostar

June to July 2027

Enjoy a spectacular concert like no other courtesy of the Dutch maestro, André Rieu, in his idyllic hometown of Maastricht. Joined by his Johann Strauss Orchestra, choir and soloists – as well as celebrity guests – André takes to the stage for a series of his famous summer concert shows on Vrijthof Square.

Board the Eurostar at London St. Pancras for Brussels, and then by coach, for a journey into the Netherlands, and enjoy a taste of Dutch life with a three-night stay in Eindhoven, Veldhoven or Helmond. Take in Utrecht's marvellous architecture and captivating museums with an afternoon at leisure in the city. Explore historic Maastricht, nestled near the Belgian border, at your own pace or discover its beauty from the Meuse River with a private optional dinner cruise ahead of the break's undeniable concert highlight. Round out your tour with André Rieu at the magical Vrijthof Square for an extraordinary evening of the Dutchman's trademark showmanship.

Air packages available from £954pp

Maastricht, The Netherlands

Price includes

- Return Eurostar rail travel to Brussels
- Three nights' four-star bed-and-breakfast accommodation
- A €75 face-value seated ticket to see André Rieu
- The services of a friendly tour manager

CALL TODAY ON
0808 231 5021
thetimes.com/nh-andremaastricht2027
QUOTE TIM

*Save 10% discount applies to André Rieu's tour packages booked by September 30, 2026 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. Offer applies to select tours only and cannot be combined with any other offer. Exclusions apply. Prices shown include discount. Single supplements apply. Prices correct at time of print. Subject to availability and maybe withdrawn at any time. These holidays are organised and operated by Newmarket Holidays Ltd, a company wholly independent of News UK. ABTOT 5509. ATOL protected 2325. ABTA V7812. Standard phone charges apply.

Our trusted partner Newmarket HOLIDAYS | ABTOT Member 5509 ABTA travel with confidence

IAN WOOLCOCK/ALAMY; JEN AND SIM BENSON

A good walk St Aldhelm's Head from Worth Matravers, Dorset

How hard is it?

7½ miles; strenuous; steep sections

Worth Matravers grew from the rock on which it stands. The honeyed Purbeck and creamy Portland stone hewn from nearby quarries both built the village and made its fortune.

From the duck pond at the centre of the village we walked past quaint old cottages, the Norman church of St Nicholas of Myra and the Square & Compass pub. Footpaths through sun-baked fields led to the coast path at Emmetts Hill, a commanding viewpoint from where the Jurassic Coast and all its extraordinary geology unfurled westwards; the glimmering turquoise crescent of Chapman's Pool, wave-carved into soft clay; the limestone ledges at Kimmeridge; the symmetrical bays of Worbarrow and Mupe whose striped strata expose over 60 million years of geological time; the horseshoe of Lulworth Cove and the arch of Durdle Door; the distant arc of Weymouth Bay; and finally, the ship-shaped outline of Portland, as if sailing out to sea.

We traced the cliff to St Aldhelm's (also known as St Alban's) Head, stopping often in awe at the view. The final stretch plummeted down a long flight of steps almost to sea level before climbing all the way back out again.

On the headland stood a National Coastwatch station and a monument to the development of radar during the Second World War. A little way inland the squat Norman chapel of St Aldhelm was possibly — due to its lack of an altar or eastward orientation — once a lookout for nearby Corfe Castle. We wandered over to the chapel, admired its vaulted ceiling, relished the cool, dark interior after the blazing heat of the day.

Though Worth Matravers had been busy we'd seen few people since, and met fewer still on the next section of the coastal path, which wound narrowly between banked grassland and the sea. Clusters of purple-flowering wild marjoram shimmered with a frenzy of gatekeeper butterflies. A flock of cheery cirl buntings flitted between the hedges. Rock samphire clung to the boulders. Close to Winspit Quarry, a line of deer appeared on the hillside above, ears and antlers silhouetted against a pale sky.

At Dancing Ledge we stopped to watch swimmers in the tidal pool, blasted out of the limestone in the 1900s. The cliffs to the east are home to the last puffin colony on mainland England's south coast. Once a thriving 80-strong flock, numbers have dwindled to three pairs, but for the first time in 30 years, this season a puffling has survived.

Climbing steeply inland we joined the Priests' Way for the final mile, a medieval track linking Swanage with Worth Matravers. A cheery welcome awaited in the garden at the Square & Compass, where homemade cider and pasties were on the menu.

Start/finish Worth Matravers village car park, BH19 3LE (SY974776)

Getting there Trains to Wareham, No40 bus towards Swanage, alight on B3039 and follow road to start. Road: A35 to Corfe Castle then B3069, Worth Matravers is signed, use village car park

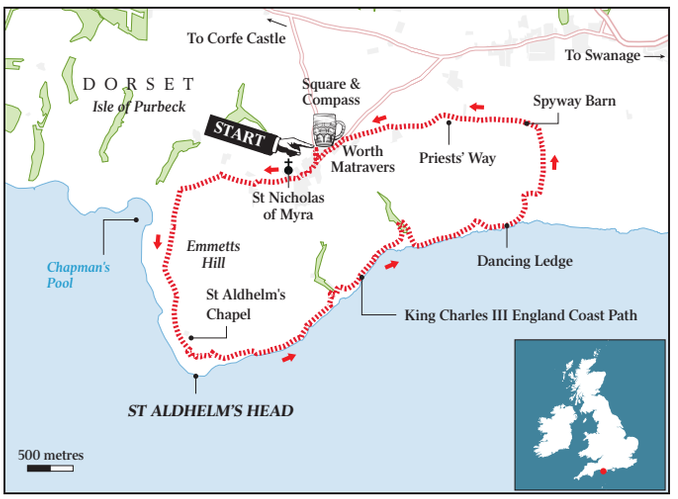
Walk Turn right out of car park, walking downhill past pub and through village to cottages at Weston Farm. Follow signs to St Aldhelm's Head, following footpath (FP) across fields to coast path (CP). Turn left, follow CP to St Aldhelm's Head. Continue, walking east to Dancing Ledge (SY996769). Bear left uphill on FP past Spyway Barn to junction with Priests' Way (PW). Turn left, follow PW back to Worth Matravers.

Lunch Square & Compass, Worth Matravers, BH19 3LF (01929 439978, squareandcompasspub.co.uk)

Accommodation Acorns, Corfe Castle (classic.co.uk)

More information Visit Dorset (visit-dorset.com)

Jen and Sim Benson



Clockwise from main: the view to the west from St Aldhelm's Head; a gatekeeper butterfly; the Square & Compass pub

> "Clusters of wild marjoram shimmered with a frenzy of gatekeeper butterflies

PETER CHRISTIAN

THE Jeano

only

£60 buy 2 for £110 SAVE £10

The perfect lightweight choice for jeans wearers, these Jeanos combine the cool comfort of chinos with the flattering cut of classic jeans. Fashioned from soft-touch cotton, enhanced with a hint of spandex for durability, these jeanos are the ideal warm weather choice for discerning legs.

- 98% cotton / 2% spandex
- Strong YKK zip fly
- 5 pocket western cut with brass rivets
- Money Back Guarantee*

Colours: Pistachio, Toffee, Azure
Sand, Navy, Nantucket, Ocean

Waist: 32 34 36 38 40
42 44 46 48 50 52"

Leg: 28 30 32 34"

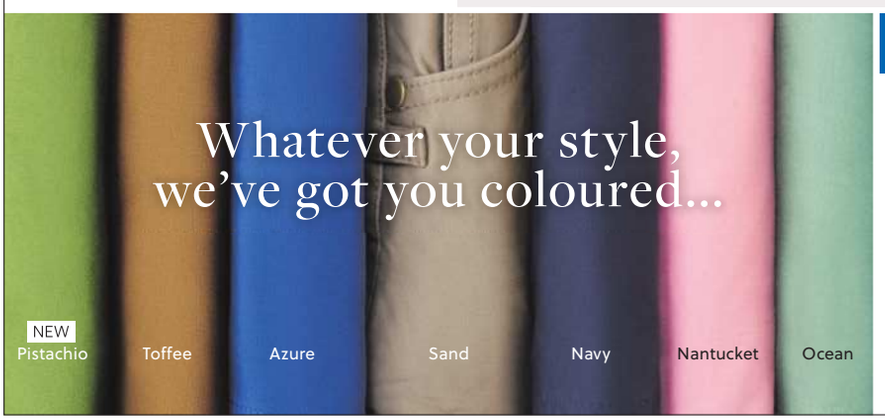
NEW
MT33
Pistachio

MT33
Sand

FREE
DELIVERY & RETURNS*
Enter
15D31
at checkout

★★★★★
"Highly recommended. Very good quality product. The jeanos are both comfortable and smart. Excellent customer service and quick delivery."
Roy, Fife

★ Trustpilot Rated **Excellent**
OVER 25,000 TRUSTED REVIEWS



Readers Special Offer

SHOP NOW

Use code **15D31** for **FREE P&P**
to order Jeanos (MT33)

peterchristian.co.uk

Call us 01273 493 393 Weekdays 9–5pm Weekends 10–3pm

Order by post – Cheques payable to Peter Christian.
Quote **15D31** with your order and send to: Freepost PETER CHRISTIAN

Go Online or Call for a Free Catalogue

*Free UK delivery (normally £5). Offer ends midnight 01/09/26. £60 minimum spend applies. This offer may not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Free returns within the UK only and subject to items being in perfect condition, in their original packaging and returned within 30 days. See our full T&C's online. A Division of Hills of Bramley Ltd. Co Reg No 04767802

Shower in safety and style with AQUABILITY

FREE TOILET & BASIN
WITH ANY SHOWER PURCHASED*

Much more than just a stylish shower.

Aquability walk-in showers seamlessly combine style and safety to offer you a mobility solution that looks great in your home and also helps you shower safely, in confidence.

- Low, easy access step
- Anti-slip flooring
- Thermostatic controls
- Contemporary design
- Easy clean tile effect panels
- Optional seat and grab rail

"Absolutely love the new shower much safer than having to climb into the bath for a shower. It looks great and fits in the space really well."

Mrs Cooper

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Rated 'Excellent'

OVER 55,000 INSTALLATIONS IN THE UK

32 YEARS AQUABILITY

FITS IN SAME SPACE AS YOUR OLD BATH!

DESIGNED AND MADE IN THE UK

FITTED IN JUST ONE DAY**

THE GUILD OF MASTER CRAFTSMEN

For more details and a FREE brochure call now on

Scan to learn more

0800 316 0110 Ask for ext. 83975

Visit our website **www.aquability.com**

*Not in conjunction with any other offer. **Time based on straightforward fitting.

For more information and a **FREE** colour brochure return this coupon to **FREEPOST RRGY-AHAX-AHSX, Aquability UK Ltd, Farnborough, GU14 0NR.** **83975**

Name _____

Tel _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

AQUABILITY EASY, SAFE BATHING

CareCo

Unbeatable offers in your local showroom

Zest Rollator **£69.99** ex VAT

Stratus Powerchair **£999.99** ex VAT

41
showrooms across the UK

Expert mobility advice over a *cuppa*

Super SALE
UP TO **50%** OFF
HURRY!
OFFERS END 31ST AUGUST

APPROVED SERVICE
Which? Trusted Trader
INSTALLATION, SERVICING AND REPAIR

Test drive a Which? recommended scooter *instore*

SEE THE FULL RANGE ONLINE
visit **www.careco.co.uk/sale**

Free Parking & Easy Access
Free, easy parking in front of the store with easy access and customer toilet facilities available.

*PLEASE NOTE: Prices exclude VAT and are available to those with a long term medical condition. All offers end 31st August 2026.

Showrooms
Open 7 days a week

EAST OF ENGLAND
Braintree, CM77 7AT
Ipswich, IP3 9SQ
Norwich, NR2 4UX
Peterborough, PE1 2FG
Stevenage, SG1 1XZ

LONDON & SOUTH EAST
Camberley, GU17 0AA
Canterbury, CT1 3RH
Croydon, CR0 3EU
Hayes, UB2 5BE
Maidstone, ME15 6HA
Milton Keynes, MK12 6HS
Oxford, OX4 2TZ
Romford, RM3 0BX

MIDLANDS
Brierley Hill, DY5 1HR
Coventry, CV6 4QY
Leicester, LE1 1SH
Lincoln, LN2 4ZS
Nottingham, NG2 1AH
Stoke, ST6 4SE

NORTH
Chester, CH1 4LT
Hull, HU10 6RJ
Leeds, LS12 1EF
Leeds OUTLET, LS25 4DY
Newcastle, NE21 5TR
Preston, PR2 6NY
Sheffield, S6 2HH
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2LR
Warrington, WA5 7YF
York, YO30 4AB

SOUTH COAST
Bournemouth, BH21 7PT
Brighton, BN15 0JQ
Eastbourne, BN24 5BS
Southampton, SO16 9GJ

SOUTH WEST
Bristol, BS34 6FB
Cheltenham, GL51 9LX
Exeter, EX2 8QX
Plymouth, PL7 1SR

SCOTLAND
Edinburgh, EH6 7LW
Opens 22nd Aug
Glasgow, G42 9JD

WALES
Cardiff, CF11 8AQ
Swansea, SA7 9EH

Opening Times

Mon – Fri	9am to 6pm
Sat & Sun	10am to 4:30pm
(10am – 10:30am viewing only)	

Trustpilot ★★★★★
Rated Excellent over 70,000 reviews

Call now on **0333 015 5000**
Mon - Fri: 8am to 6pm Sat & Sun: 10am to 4.30pm

Visit our website
www.careco.co.uk

The Glass Sale

Inviting Consignments until 28 August

Consign to our specialist auction celebrating three centuries of fine glass, from Georgian drinking glasses to contemporary studio masterpieces.

FOR A FREE AUCTION VALUATION CONTACT

alexfroggatt@sworder.co.uk

07599 653834

sworder.co.uk

EST. 1782

sworders

FINE ART AUCTIONEERS

SALE NOW ON 25% OFF

Bathe in luxury, comfort and safety once again!

- British designed and manufactured
- Safely lowers and raises you at the click of a button
- Battery operated, no wiring or cables just recharge every 7-10 days
- Belt retracts into cassette for normal bath use for other family members
- Stud walls no problem
- Normally fitted in under an hour

For a FREE brochure call us on:

0800 011 4387

TRY IT OUT! WITH A FREE 'DRY' HOME DEMO

ALSO, ASK ABOUT OUR RANGE OF MOBILITY SCOOTERS & STAIRLIFTS.

Dolphin, Britains household name in mobility

ELITE MOBILITY ESTABLISHED 2000

★★★ MASSIVE SALE ★★★

NOW ON!

THE EXTREME SERIES

INTERIOR HEATER

- Scandinavian engineering at its best
- Designed for on and off-road use
- Eco-aware electric heater
- Rear reversing camera
- Central locking and alarm

FOR A FREE HOME DEMONSTRATION, CALL 0800 169 5910 TODAY

THE CABIN CAR STAY WARM THIS WINTER

HUNDREDS OF NEW & USED SCOOTERS AVAILABLE IN OUR MASSIVE SALE

★★★ ELITE'S BEST-SELLING EASY FOLD WHEELCHAIR & SCOOTER ★★★

EML CARBON LITE POWER WHEELCHAIR

EML AERO CARBON FOLDING SCOOTER

Ultra Lightweight, Car Boot Friendly

Flip Up Arms & Detachable Footrests

Effortless Folding & Storage, Only 11kg

ELITE Mobility

OVER 25 YEARS IN BUSINESS

www.elitemobility.co.uk

0800 169 5910

CALL FOR FREE HOME DEMONSTRATION

---

pollock Homelifts

A HOME ELEVATOR. WITHOUT THE SHAFT.

The Pollock Residential Elevator has the smallest footprint on the market. Its shaftless, self-contained design means no bulky lift well and no heavy structure attached to your wall.

Stay independent. Without changing how your home feels.

TRUSTMARK Government Endorsed Quality

0800 472 5002 pollockhomelifts.co.uk

Acorn Stairlifts

Regain the freedom of your home

"My stairlift has given me back my quality of life."

Miss Hall

Keeping you safe in the home you love

It is more important than ever for people to remain mobile and independent in their own homes, and we are here to help.

- **NEXT DAY** installation available
- Stay in the home you love
- For straight and curved staircases
- **FREE** no-obligation survey and quote
- 365-day local service and support

Scan for more information:

CALL ACORN NOW ON FREEPHONE

0800 016 9148

FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURE & QUOTATION

Has bathing become a struggle?

Step into comfort with a **stylish Wet Room** or **Walk-In Shower.**

£500 CASH BACK
On installations booked before 31/08/26. T&Cs apply, see website for details.

Lifetime Installation Guarantee

As a family-run company, we understand that maintaining your independence and comfort at home is crucial.

Our easy-access, **walk-in showers**, **walk-in baths**, **wheelchair-friendly wet rooms** and **comfort-height toilets** are installed quickly and safely, by our own dedicated team. We manage all the changes, from concept to completion, giving you total peace of mind.

Which bathing solution is right for you?

Trustpilot
'We're rated 'Excellent'

Which? Trusted Trader

Proud partners of MS Society

Walk-In Bathing Solutions

- Fits in the same space as your old bath
- Fast installation, in as little as a day
- Low-level, slip-resistant shower trays
- Fold-flat, comfortable shower seat
- Secure shower grab handle rail
- Modern designs, tailored to you

PERSONALISED CARE | BESPOKE DESIGN | SPECIALIST INSTALLERS | LIFETIME GUARANTEE

To book a FREE consultation or for our latest brochure

Call free 0800 955 0036

Lines Open 7 Days a Week

or visit: eamobility.com

Scan the code to visit our website

eamobility Group

Gtech

The *Platinum* cordless cleaning system

Award-winning power and performance without the plug.

SAVE £270
WAS ~~£669.98~~
NOW £399.98
FREE NEXT DAY DELIVERY

Includes FREE Car Accessory kit worth £50

Use code: **CD46**

ANTI-HAIR WRAP
Prevents hair build-up on the brush bar

AIRLOC TECHNOLOGY
Powered floorhead maximises performance

ALUMINIUM STRENGTH
Strengthened with aluminium parts

The ultimate cordless home-cleaning solution.

Introducing the **Gtech System Platinum.** Two lightweight, cordless vacuums in one powerful combination. Glide from carpets to hard floors, with our award-winning upright, the **AirRAM Platinum** or use the handheld **Multi Platinum** to tackle stairs upholstery and everything in between. Beautifully crafted using superior materials, the **System Platinum** combines advanced cordless technology with first-class performance.

Easy To Use The AirRAM Platinum's low-profile handle glides easily under furniture, while the Multi Platinum is the handheld cleaning solution for spotless upholstery and stairs.

Handy Attachments The Multi Platinum comes with a crevice tool for awkward spaces, an extension tube to reach high or low, and a dusting brush to make delicate surfaces sparkle.

Longer Run Time The AirRAM Platinum and Multi Platinum have a combined runtime of up to 90 minutes*.

Forward Inertia Drive The AirRAM Platinum glides forward, making cleaning your home virtually effortless.

"It's so light..."
"I just love this vacuum. My carpets have had a new lease of life. It is so light and easy to manoeuvre, also easy to empty and store, most importantly it does a great job of what it was designed for."
Eileen M
★★★★★

"Probably the best upright cordless vac ever."

T3 ★★★★★ PLATINUM AWARD
Gtech AirRAM Platinum 07/2022

Get our **System Platinum** for **£399.98** (RRP **£619.98**) and get a **FREE Car Cleaning Kit worth £50**, saving £270 off RRP if you order before 30/09/2026. Order now at **gtech.co.uk** (enter code **CD46** at checkout) or scan the QR code:

Inventor & Owner, Nick Grey
"The AirRAM Platinum and Multi Platinum are perfect partners. We've combined our newest innovations to create the ultimate cleaning solution, as well as being robust and stylish too. Ideal for modern homes."

Nick

www.gtech.co.uk
Use code: **CD46**

Free tracked next day delivery and 2-year warranty

dpd

Offers valid until 30/09/2026 or while stocks last and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Individual RRP of AirRAM Platinum is £349.99 and Multi Platinum is £269.99 which gives a total RRP of £619.98. 30-day money-back guarantee, excluding £10 collection fee. *Run times quoted may vary depending on surfaces cleaned. See www.gtech.co.uk for full details.

SETTING THE STANDARD FOR SAFER LADDERS

HENCHMAN®

LADDERS FOR UNEVEN GROUND

The Fully Adjustable Tripod Ladder named a Which? Best Buy 2026*

MAY 2025 Which? Best Buy GARDEN LADDERS

Unlike a conventional stepladder, a Henchman's unique design ensures you are safe, stable and secure when working at height, even on sloping, soft or uneven ground.

Engineered to deliver outstanding stability, comfort and control, when you use a Henchman ladder you can easily tackle demanding garden jobs and indoor DIY safely, and with confidence.

- **SAFE ON UNEVEN SURFACES**
  Fully adjustable tripod legs enable the ladder to be stable on slopes, levelled or uneven ground.
- **WORK COMFORTABLY HANDS-FREE**
  A wide platform rung combined with high guard rail allow you to keep both hands free whilst remaining secure.
- **FIRM FOOTING ON SOFT GROUND**
  Wide claw feet firmly grip into soft terrain. Optional rubber feet included for extra grip on hard or indoor surfaces.

"Excellent service and quick delivery. Ladder is exceptional quality and I feel safe using it."
Sarah M

bsi Mobile Ladders with Platform KITEMARK™

GET £40 OFF AN ACCESSORY**

when you buy any Henchman Tripod Ladder

FREE RUBBER FEET INCLUDED *(worth £29)*

Select accessory & apply promo code TT826 in basket

Ladder Hooks

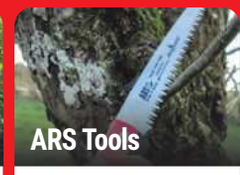
Secure your tripod ladder on our Ladder Hooks.

Was £39.00 **FREE**

Tool Bag

Designed to be used with any platformed tripod ladder.

Was £69.00 **£29.00**



ARS Tools

High quality gardening tools made with Japanese carbon steel.

£40 off the range**

* 2.4m fully adjustable and Pro models. ** View all accessories at www.henchman.co.uk/collections/all-gardening-accessories. Excludes wheelbarrows. Any unused balance cannot be credited.

Scan the QR code to see our full range of products and find your perfect Henchman Tripod Ladder

Henchman.co.uk | 03333 444 229

Excellent ★ 5.3k+ reviews

★★★★★ Trustpilot

Crocodile PRODUCTS

Bring the indoors, outdoors.
With Crocodile Glass Verandas.

Made in the UK

Call 0800 011 2234
www.crocodile.co.uk

Get together and entertain. Make your home more desirable for outside dining and future-proof your social time with design and flair. Extend your living space to share more priceless family time, or simply create more opportunities to relax.
Celebrate your outdoor environment.

UP TO 3 YEARS INTEREST FREE CREDIT

Terms & Conditions Apply

Over 37,000 Homelifts Installed

Trustpilot
Rated 'Excellent'

The UK's Original Homelift

Stay in the home you love with a Stiltz Lift from the UK's LARGEST homelift provider.

- Fits in any home
- Installed in one day
- Economic to use
- Quiet as a whisper
- Engineer support 24/7
- We handle everything
- Four cabin sizes available, including wheelchair model

For a Free brochure and no-obligation home survey

0808 296 1107
stiltz.co.uk

Stiltz Homelifts

PRICES FROM £165,000 TO £500,000+

WHERE COAST MEETS CULTURE

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE & EXPLORE THE TIMELESS CHARM OF NORTH NORFOLK OR THE STUNNING SUFFOLK HERITAGE COAST

Enjoy endless holidays, all from one beautiful place. Your lodge. Your retreat. Your family's forever memories. It's time to make it yours. Discover luxury holiday lodge owenrship at Marsh View, Aldeburgh & The Poplars, Burnham Market.

Exclusive lifestyle properties | Fully furnished and available now
Significant rental opportunity | No stamp duty | No council tax

LUXURYLODGEESCAPES.CO

ESCAPE, EXPLORE, ENJOY, RETREAT

LUXURY LODGE ESCAPES

Refresh your home this Summer

Quality made-to-measure curtains have the potential to transform any room. Our collection blends style and practicality, offering a huge choice of stunning fabrics, a range of header styles, and energy-saving linings, so you can stay warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

Plus, our **Complete Window Service**† offers a selection of tracks and poles so we can take care of everything for you, from precise measuring to expert fitting.

- **FREE** home service
- **FREE** no-obligation quote
- **FREE** expert measuring
- **FREE** 5-year guarantee
- **TRUSTED** expert fitting

T&Cs: *Percentage discount varies by design, ask your Home Consultant for full details, exclusions apply. **£50 free accessories offer is available when you spend £499 or more after discount. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other free gift or accessories promotion, but can be used alongside most other promotional offers. Offer cannot be used on orders already placed. †Service available in around 87% of the UK. ▲Our interest free credit partner is Payment Assist Ltd, registered in England and Wales 622544. The registered address is Payment Assist Ltd, Pera Business Park, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0PB. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and entered on the Financial Services Register under firm registration number 622544. Credit is subject to status; UK residents age restrictions apply. Sarah Plumb Ltd, trading as Plumbs, Brookhouse Mill, Old Lancaster Lane, Preston, PR1 7PZ. Registered in England and Wales no. 15978225.

ADVERTISEMENT

"It's the ultimate lawn care duo: the Ryobi 18V Cordless 33cm Lawnmower with **FREE** 23cm Grass Trimmer!"

Summer is upon us and that means one thing: more frequent lawn maintenance. But fear not, Ryobi has created the perfect package to make this task a breeze. Say goodbye to tangled wires and messy petrol motors, and hello to the convenience of cordless battery-powered tools. With the Ryobi 18V Cordless 33cm Lawnmower and **FREE** 23cm Grass Trimmer, you'll have the perfect pair to keep your lawn looking pristine.

Effortless mowing with the cordless lawnmower

Imagine the freedom of mowing your lawn without being tethered to a power outlet. Ryobi's best-selling 18V lawnmower makes that dream a reality. Its cordless design means you can effortlessly navigate around your garden. No more tripping over wires or limited range of motion.

Weighing in at a lightweight 8.7kg, this mower is a breeze to push and maneouvre, reducing fatigue and making mowing a joy, not a chore. And its innovative EasyEdge™ feature trims right up to the edge, leaving no stray blades of grass behind. Your lawn will have that polished, professional look that will make your neighbours green with envy.

Trustpilot 4.5/5 'Rated Excellent'

This mower boasts some impressive features, too! With its 5-position cutting height adjustment, you have full control over the length of your grass (from 25-65mm). The ergonomic handle design with three height positions ensures comfortable operation for users of all heights.

It's easy to empty, thanks to the mulching plug and generous 35L grass catcher bag. Plus, its clever collapsible design makes it so easy to store away, too.

FREE cordless trimmer for the perfect finish

As a bonus, you'll receive the Ryobi Cordless 23cm Grass Trimmer **absolutely free**. It effortlessly tackles fine grass and keeps your edges looking pristine. Switch between edging and trimming modes with Ryobi's innovative EasyEdge™ feature.

With its durable all-metal boom and ergonomic twin-handle set-up, this trimmer is designed to make your gardening experience more comfortable and efficient.

The Ryobi 18V Cordless 33cm Lawnmower with **FREE** 23cm Grass Trimmer offers the perfect combination of performance, versatility, and ease of use.

Say goodbye to the hassle of wires and petrol and hello to a perfectly manicured lawn with minimal effort. This fantastic offer from the garden experts at Ryobi also includes your 5.0Ah battery and charger starter kit.

SAVE AN EXTRA £20
(Limited Time Offer)

Charged and ready to mow!

FREE GRASS TRIMMER Worth £61.99

"Very lightweight. Easy to manoeuvre. So pleased I replaced my heavy petrol mower!"
Wendy, Verified Purchaser

VIDEO ONLINE

AS SEEN ON TV

Act now! FREE Grass Trimmer worth £61.99!

Order Ryobi's 18V Cordless 33cm Lawnmower today for just £199.99 and receive the 23cm Cordless Grass Trimmer absolutely FREE! Both products are covered by Ryobi's impressive 3-year guarantee and include fast, free GB mainland delivery.

What you get

- Ryobi 18V Cordless 33cm Lawnmower (RLM18X33B50LT23A)
- **FREE** 23cm Grass Trimmer
- ONE+ 5.0Ah Battery
- ONE+ 2.0A Charger
- 3-Year Guarantee*
- Free Delivery (GB mainland only)

18V ONE+ CORDLESS BATTERY SYSTEM

One battery fits all

Ryobi's 18V ONE+ Battery System is designed for cordless convenience. All Ryobi's cordless tool kits come complete with a battery and charger to start your ONE+ system. Then, expand your system for less by buying new tools and only adding batteries or chargers if you need them.

200+ TOOLS for the home and garden powered by one battery

30 YEARS Of ONE+ battery system innovation

SAVE MONEY Expand your collection of tools without batteries

FREE Grass Trimmer Worth £61.99

~~Was £219.99~~

NOW ONLY £199.99 including FREE DELIVERY to GB Mainland only

††Further restrictions may apply

ORDER NOW

Call 0333 006 9466
PROMOTION CODE PR5386
Lines open 8am-8pm Monday-Sunday

www.ryobitools.co.uk/press

Scan to shop now

3 YEAR GUARANTEE

FREE DELIVERY GB ONLY

Subject to availability. *Registration required for warranty extension from 2 – 3 years. Register within 30 days of receipt of goods at RyobiTools.co.uk. †Saving against RRPs of kit components. † †Free 3-5 day delivery to GB Mainland only. NI & Scottish Highlands charged at £5.99. Restricted delivery postcodes IM, JE, GY, TR2. Your right to cancel will last for 14 days after receipt of goods. If you change your mind during this period, provided the goods remain unused & in original packaging, you can notify us of cancellation. Product sold by Techtronic Industries (UK) Limited, company registration: GB 551396338. All rights reserved. For full terms & conditions of sale please visit RyobiTools.co.uk. RYOBI is a Trade Mark of Ryobi Limited, and is used under license. Trustpilot score correct as of February 2025.

RYOBI

Fischer

THE COMFORT BEHIND EVERY BEAUTIFUL HOME.

Get **FREE** Fischer Catalogue

SCAN BELOW

10 YEAR WARRANTY

FINANCE OPTIONS AVAILABLE

Fischer classic

- Room-by-room control for personalised comfort
- HeatCore technology for efficient, lasting warmth
- German engineered with a 10 year warranty
- Nationwide installation by our trusted UK network

aquafficient

- Save space without sacrificing performance
- 40,000+ cycles (up to 50 years of use)
- On-demand hot water to keep up with your lifestyle
- 100% electric for seamless compatibility

Rated **Excellent** ★ **7.7K+** reviews Trustpilot **4.8** Rating for service

REQUEST YOUR **FREE** CATALOGUE

SCAN ME

0800 103 2716

fischerfutureheat.com

British Owned

Request your FREE catalogue today

Quote code **TT3126**

or post the coupon

Address the envelope to: FREEPOST FISCHER FUTURE HEAT (No stamp or address required)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____ **TT3126**

We like to listen to our customers - for this reason the Bastian Plc Group of companies may contact you about exciting new products we are developing and offers or deals which may be of interest to you so that you don't miss out. To learn more about the Bastian Plc Group of companies and how we look after your data please see our updated privacy policy as www.fischerfutureheat.com/privacy-cookie-policy/

*Fischer is a trading style of Fischer Future Heat UK Limited. Fischer Future Heat UK Limited T/A Fischer (5 Merchant Square, London, W2 1AY) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRM 732544. We act as a credit broker not a lender and offer finance from a panel of lenders. Registered in England and Wales. 1Excluding electronic components and plugs, spurs and sockets which come with a 2-year warranty. Labour excluded.2. Applies to the storage core and element. All other parts for 2 years. Labour excluded. 3Calculated using SAP2012. Privacy Policy: https://fischerfutureheat.com/privacy-cookie-policy/

CALL NOW ON 0800 169 4748 TO GET YOUR DREAM KITCHEN IN AUGUST

Transform your kitchen with minimal disruption

Save up to 50% compared to a full kitchen re-fit

With Kitchen Magic you can bring your kitchen back to life for a lot less than you might think...REPLACE YOUR DOORS, DRAWER FRONTS AND WORKTOPS FOR A HASSLE FREE TRANSFORMATION!

Our skilled installers work with your existing cupboards rather than tearing them out, which means no emptying every cupboard beforehand, far less mess to clean up afterwards, and a kitchen you can carry on using while the work is happening around you. Most kitchens are completed in a day or two, so the disruption to your home, and routine, is kept to a minimum.

Our team of regional designers will visit you in your home to show you samples, discuss your requirements and prepare an accurate quotation for the work you are looking to do. Every door and drawer front is created in our Midlands factory using advanced technology, measured and manufactured to fit your kitchen precisely, then fitted by an expert team who see the job through . A brand-new kitchen, without the upheaval of complete re-fit. **That's Kitchen Magic.**

MADE IN BRITAIN

5 reasons why you should choose Kitchen Magic

- No demolition, no mess, just a beautiful transformation
- Premium quality bespoke doors proudly made in the UK
- Family run business for over 4 decades
- Expert design, manufacture & fitting – we take care of everything
- Fast turnaround, minimal disruption – your new kitchen from design to installation in as little as 3 weeks

Scan or call today for a FREE brochure, or to book your FREE home design visit

0800 169 4748 kitchen-magic.com

Please quote offer code **TW01/08**, lines open 7 days a week.

Kitchen Magic Limited, Forward Park, 315 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 7DS

Kitchen Magic

ADVERTISEMENT

Poor sleep? Aches and pains? Here's the solution...

A father's devotion leads to incredible patented pillow – one day all pillows will be made this way

A NEAR tragedy has led to an amazing new development in sleep technology. When Georgia Miles was recovering from a life-threatening accident, her father Alexander looked everywhere for a pillow that would keep her comfortable throughout the night.

After purchasing dozens of different types and finding none that worked, Alex, a renowned furniture and domestic product designer, decided to engineer his own.

UNIQUE BREAKTHROUGH

He made a breakthrough when he realised that all pillows spread out and flatten down as the weight of the head rests on them. This flattening progresses through the night, leaving the head and neck poorly supported – and sleep interrupted. This is why many people find themselves half awake and 'pillow-punching' in the middle of the night, desperately trying to get comfortable.

EXTRA COMFORT AND SUPPORT

The innovative model that Alex designed has internal ties that hold the filling in place, and pull the pillow in and up to cradle the head and neck. This provides extra comfort and support that lasts through the night and ensures that you get the most benefit from an undisturbed sleep.

"I can honestly say that your pillow has made the world of difference… and fully endorse your pillow as being quite unique in its ability to maintain support throughout the night."

Dr Deane Halfpenny
Harley Street Consultant and Spinal Pain Specialist

MADE IN THE UK

Made in the UK, the Gx Pillow comes in a choice of two levels of support: Medium-soft, which most people seem to prefer, or Medium-firm for those who like a little more resistance. Alex's desperate desire to help his daughter Georgia has led to a pillow that has also transformed the lives of thousands of people. So if you have spent a lifetime looking for the perfect pillow, your search may well be over!

Alexander Miles, inventor of the Gx Pillow pictured with his invention

INFORMATION: *gxpillows/0800 316 2689*

BIGGEST EVER DISCOUNT for Times Weekend readers – 25% off!

The amazing Gx Pillow™ helps thousands sleep better

25% off with code TW24
SINGLE PILLOW ~~£39.99~~ £29.99
TWIN PACK ~~£59.99~~ £44.99
for Times Weekend readers

- ✓ Unique internal tie technology maintains shape throughout the night
- ✓ Provides comfort and support
- ✓ Integral air vent keeps you cool
- ✓ Luxurious 100% cotton shell
- ✓ Hypoallergenic Polycoz filling
- ✓ Over 500,000 UK sales
- ✓ Designed, patented and made in the UK
- ✓ Choose from Medium-soft or Medium-firm

"I cannot believe that after 40 years I have finally found the best pillow ever!!!! It simply stays put and so comfy, fabulous, must buy more for hubby and a spare."

Izzy, Yorkshire

OUR PROMISE TO YOU! Sleep on the Gx Pillow for 30 nights and if you are not completely satisfied, we'll give you your money back*

Enjoy a great night's sleep AND 25% OFF! THAT'S...

2 PILLOWS FOR ~~£59.99~~ £44.99! £15 SAVING!

25% off for Times Weekend readers with code TW24

Choose from Medium-soft, Medium-firm or one of each!

Or buy 1 Gx PILLOW for ~~£39.99~~ £29.99 £10 SAVING!

SCAN HERE and code will automatically be applied

ORDER NOW! FREEPHONE: 0800 316 2689
Lines open Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm.
Quote TW24 for 25% off

OR GO ONLINE: gxpillows.co.uk
Enter TW24 in discount box for 25% off

**Terms and conditions apply - please see website for details.*

Post to: FREEPOST BEAUTIFUL SLEEP TW24
No other details or stamp required

Description	Tick your preferred pillow(s)	Price	Qty	Subtotal
£15 off! Gx Pillows Twin pack	☐ 2 x Medium-soft (was £59.99)	£44.99		
	☐ 2 x Medium-firm (was £59.99)	£44.99		
	☐ 1 x Med-soft + 1 x Med-firm (was £59.99)	£44.99		
£10 off! Single pillow	☐ 1 x Medium-soft (was £39.99)	£29.99		
	☐ 1 x Medium-firm (was £39.99)	£29.99		
		Postage & Packing		£4.95
		ORDER TOTAL		

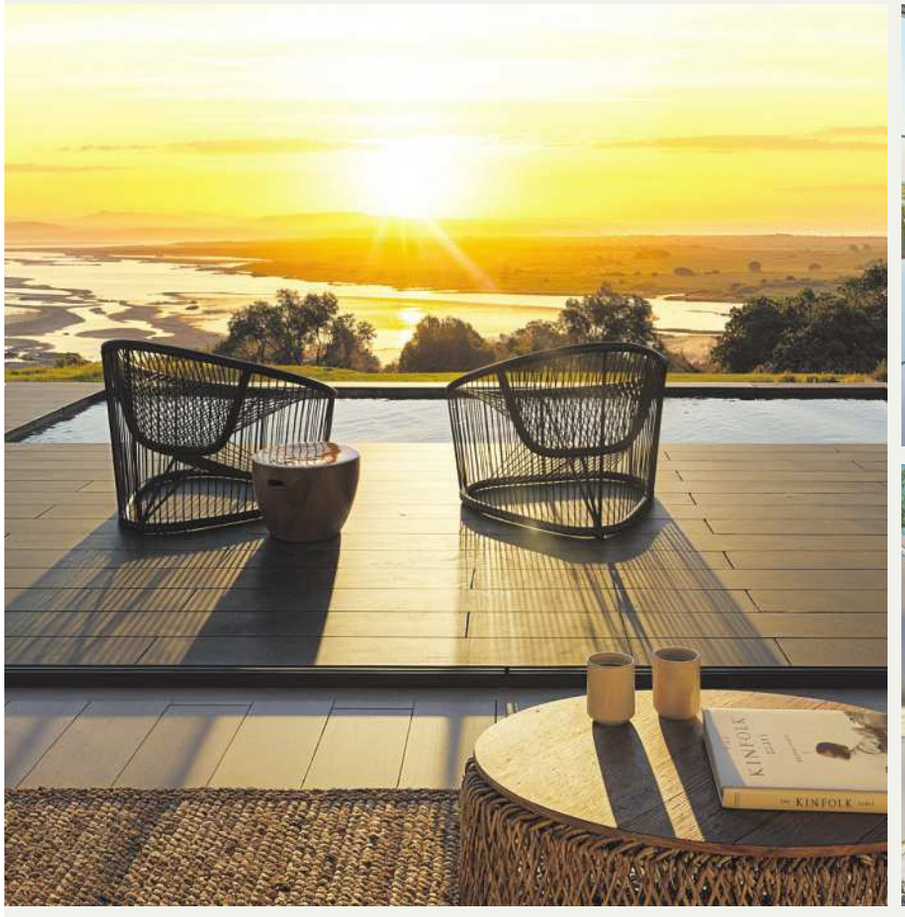
☐ I enclose a cheque payable to Beautiful Sleep for £_____
☐ Or charge my credit/debit card:
Card No. ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐
Expiry ☐☐ / ☐☐ CVC ☐☐☐

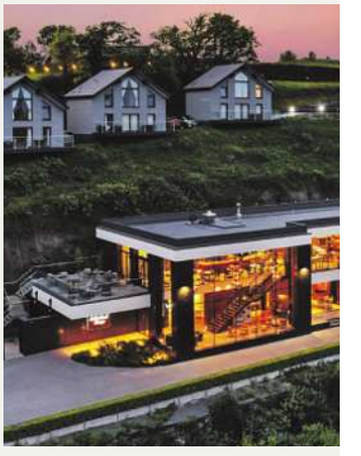
Signature _____
Name _____
Address _____
_____ Postcode _____
Tel no _____
Email _____

RESIDENCES
BY LUXURY LODGES

FROM £145,000

LUXURY HOLIDAY HOMES, THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE





950-YEAR OWNERSHIP • STRONG RENTAL RETURNS • FIVE-STAR AMENITIES
SIX RESORTS ACROSS THE UK • NO STAMP DUTY • NO COUNCIL TAX

Family-run for over a decade. Six award-winning resorts across Wales, Cornwall, the Lake District, Northumberland and County Durham. Built to last, owned for generations.

Call 0800 404 5680

Scan for more info

ADVERTISEMENT

Lighting, listings and lowballing… there's got to be an easier way to sell old items?

A tale of clutter, cupboards and finding a simpler way.

Day 1. Tackled the cupboard.

Discovered: Uncle Bill's medals. Nana's silver cutlery. Three defunct watches. Jamie's old camera. Auntie Val's coin collection in a travel sweet tin. A posh-looking brooch with a broken clasp. A fountain pen my Mum used for her O-Levels. A diamond ring that gets halfway down my pinkie. Uncle Archie's cigar case. And one gold hoop.

Am I related to pirates?

Fired up the laptop ready to start listing online. Cleared the kitchen table for a photo shoot. Faffed around with spoons so they didn't reflect the ceiling light.

Attempted descriptions. Not entirely sure how one writes about medals. Or coins. Or a camera that never recovered after the Lake District trip in 1974.

Messages have started arriving. Someone would like measurements. Someone else wants a better photo of the spoons. Someone else would like to know if I'll take half the price.

Still need to find boxes. And packing tape. And the end of the packing tape.

There must be an easier way.

Day 2. Grumpy new neighbour at No.56 found me rooting around the recyclers for boxes.

Told me to try Vintage Cash Cow. They'll take the lot. In one box.

Vintage toys, designer handbags, gold, jewellery, watches, cameras, old tech, silver, coins, medals, Lego, binoculars… and more. **Broken, tangled, doesn't matter. I'll send it. They'll sort it.**

No listings. No haggling. No no-shows. No multiple post office trips.

Really, though?

Yes. Turns out they're rated **Excellent on Trustpilot,** with more than 23,000 five-star reviews.

Margaret, speaks my language:

"Decluttering is such a chore… I would never have got round to selling any of this stuff any other way…"

John's a fan:

"Vintage cash cow make it so easy… I have sent 2 large boxes and am in the process of sending a third… once I accepted the offer **the money was in my account within 48 hours**…"

Cheryl, I hear you:

"I have reached the age now where I have gathered a lot of 'stuff'… mostly things that belonged to relatives no longer with us… Virtually all of it tucked away never seeing the light of day… **Money in the bank and more room in my cupboards.**"

That does it. I'm ordering a free postage pack now.

Day 3.

Helpful new neighbour from No.56 came round with a sturdy old wine box and some bubble wrap.

All I have to do is pack the box, arrange a collection, or use the freepost label in the postage pack at the Post Office. I'll receive confirmation of receipt. Experts will sort, value and make me an offer. Accept and I'll get paid, or say no and my things are returned. All free and insured (see t&Cs).

I feel liberated.

Taking charming new neighbour from No.56 out for a cheeky glass of pinot.

More than 700,000 people have used Vintage Cash Cow, with customers saying they wish they'd tried it sooner.

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

TAILORMADE TRAVEL WORLDWIDE **020 7938 0207**

CRUISE TRAILFINDERS **020 7938 0209**

FIRST & BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL **020 7938 0208**

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

Call to talk through your plans and order your ***TRAILFINDER*** magazine filled with offers

TF TRUST

ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★ **No.1 TOUR OPERATOR**

Which? Awards 2026 TRAVEL BRAND OF THE YEAR

IATA

CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED

FIND YOUR ULTIMATE ROAD TRIP...

Great Value Garden Route & Safari, South Africa
12 nights from **£1,999**◊
Plus ZAR 659pp payable locally.
Flights, 3★+ to 4★+ hotels, 8 days car hire, 2 Day Cape Town Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour, Franschhoek Wine Tram, Cango Caves Heritage Tour, 2 Half Day Pumba Safari Experiences, 9 meals and private arrival transfer

California Cruising
14 nights from **£1,449**#
Plus USD 409pp payable locally.
Direct flights, 3 nights 4★ San Francisco hotel incl breakfast, 11 nights motorhome hire sleeping up to 5 incl 1,500 mileage pack and Alcatraz & San Francisco 2 Day Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour
***SPECIAL OFFER** 50% off Mileage Pack – saving over £250 per couple*

Kia Ora New Zealand
24 nights from **£2,849**◊
Flights, 2 nights 4★ Auckland hotel, 20 nights motorhome hire incl unlimited mileage, Kaikoura Whale Watching Cruise and 2 nights 4★ Queenstown hotel incl breakfast
• See the best of New Zealand's North & South Island from the comfort of a motorhome • Marvel at the awe-inspiring scenery in Queenstown

TF'S TOP PICK
3 Week Australia Adventure just £2,249

FIND YOUR HOLIDAY INSPIRATION...

Antigua Family Holiday
7 nights from **£1,749***
Direct flights, 4★ Antigua **all inclusive** beach resort and private transfers
• Unwind on two stunning white sand beaches • Take advantage of a plethora of facilities including six pools, four tennis courts and a kids' club
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discount – saving over £1,500 per family*
Priced for May Half-Term Holiday

The Norway Classic Coastal Express
12 nights from **£2,599**#
Direct flights, 1 night Bergen hotel incl breakfast, 11 night cruise with Hurtigruten incl full board and private transfers
• Call at 34 unique ports along Norway's coast • Experience Tromsø, the "Gateway to the Arctic" • Cross the Arctic Circle • Start and end your voyage in historic Bergen – framed by mountains and sea

Heritance Aarah, Maldives
7 nights from **£3,999**◊
Flights, 5★ **all inclusive** beach resort and seaplane transfers
• Relax on white sand beaches, a beachfront infinity pool or at the Overwater Spa • Indulge in seven incredible restaurants • Take advantage of the onsite dive site
***SPECIAL OFFER** 20% hotel discount – saving over £1,350 per couple*

Best of Canada's West
15 nights from **£2,799**◊
Direct flights, 3★ to 4★+ hotels, 14 days car hire and Vancouver Island ferry transfers
• Discover the maritime history and waterfront charm of Victoria • Be amazed by the turquoise lakes and epic scenery in the Rockies • Visit wineries in the Okanagan Valley
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discounts – saving over £350 per couple*

FIND YOUR ASIA ADVENTURE...

Spectacular Sri Lanka
15 nights from **£2,749**#
Direct flights, 12 day private tour incl 11 nights 3★ to 4★ hotels, private car/driver & 12 meals, 4 nights 4★+ beach resort incl breakfast and private transfers
• Learn about the country's fascinating history in the Cultural Triangle
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discount – saving over £600 per couple*

Bangkok, Phuket & Koh Phi Phi, Thailand
13 nights from **£1,849**◊
Flights, 3 nights 4★ Bangkok hotel, 6 nights 4★+ Phuket beach resort, 4 nights 4★ Koh Phi Phi beach resort, breakfast and transfers
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discount – saving over £250 per couple*

Japan: Osaka, Kyoto, Mount Fuji & Tokyo
7 nights from **£3,199**◊
Flights, 1 night pre tour 4★+ hotel and 7 day guided small group adventure tour incl 6 nights hotels, shared transport, tour leader, activities/excursions & 15 meals
• Wander through Gion, Kyoto's most famous geisha district

Vietnam Express Southbound
10 nights from **£1,799**#
Flights, 1 night pre tour hotel incl breakfast, 10 day guided small group adventure tour incl 7 nights hotels, 1 night junk boat, 1 overnight sleeper train, shared transport, tour leader, activities/excursions & 13 meals and private transfers
• Bask in the evolving landscapes of Vietnam as you travel down the country

THE ORIGINAL FLIGHT EXPERTS

WHEREVER AND WHENEVER... TRUST TRAILFINDERS TO TAKE CARE OF YOU

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
LONDON KENSINGTON	020 7938 3939	020 7938 3444
LONDON CITY	020 7628 7628	020 7628 2345
LONDON CANARY WHARF	020 7147 5300	020 7147 5344
LONDON WEST END	020 7408 9000	020 7408 9044
LONDON EALING	020 8799 0400	020 8799 0447
LONDON RICHMOND	020 8799 0444	020 8799 0445
LONDON KINGSTON	0204 613 6000	0204 613 6044
ABERDEEN	01224 578 600	01224 578 644
BATH	01225 724 000	01225 724 044
BELFAST	028 9027 1888	028 9027 1844
BIRMINGHAM	0121 236 1234	0121 236 3444
BOURNEMOUTH	01202 411 600	01202 411 644
BRIGHTON	01273 715 500	01273 715 544
BRISTOL	0117 929 9000	0117 929 1036
CAMBRIDGE	01223 461 600	01223 448 188
CANTERBURY	01227 865 700	01227 865 744
CARDIFF	02920 726 600	02920 726 644
CARLISLE	01228 471 100	01228 471 044
CHELMSFORD	01245 961 400	01245 961 361
CHELTENHAM	01242 437 372	01242 437 384
CHESTER	01244 888 777	01244 888 744
EDINBURGH	0131 243 2800	0131 243 2844
EXETER	01392 458 200	01392 458 244
GLASGOW	0141 353 2224	0141 353 2400
GUILDFORD	01483 478 400	01483 478 444
LEEDS	0113 246 2200	0113 246 2244
LIVERPOOL	0151 221 9500	0151 221 9544
MANCHESTER	0161 839 6969	0161 839 3434
MILTON KEYNES	01908 348 400	01908 348 348
NEWCASTLE	0191 261 2345	0191 261 7344
NORWICH	01603 216 216	01603 216 244
NOTTINGHAM	0115 948 7700	0115 948 7744
OXFORD	01865 261 000	01865 261 044
READING	0118 334 6500	0118 334 6544
SHEFFIELD	0114 349 9200	0114 349 9191
SOLIHULL	0121 716 9000	0121 716 8999
SOUTHAMPTON	0238 251 4920	0238 251 4940
ST ALBANS	01727 807 700	01727 807 744
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	01892 347 180	01892 347 200
WINCHESTER	01962 798 500	01962 798 444
WINDSOR	01753 297 400	01753 297 444
WORCESTER	01905 349 555	01905 349 600
YORK	01904 942 900	01904 942 899

SPECIALIST TEAMS

CRUISE SPECIALISTS	020 7084 6502
CORPORATE TRAVEL	020 7368 1499
GROUP TRAVEL	020 7938 3858
TRAVEL INSURANCE	020 7408 9005
VISA & PASSPORT SERVICE	020 7368 1504
WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS	020 7408 9008
GAP YEAR & STUDENT TRAVEL	020 7084 6530
PRIVATE TOURING	020 7084 6504

Calls may be recorded for accuracy & training

NO.1 FOR FLIGHTS ON TRUSTPILOT – HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING

"Lauren was so helpful in getting us a better price for our flights by moving our dates around. Saved us over £1,000! Great service."

★★★★★

- All flights include at least 20kg of baggage.
- 24/7/365 support from a person based in the UK, not a chat-bot. Often solving problems before you knew they existed.
- The average booking is impacted by 2 schedule changes. We address this without stress or cost to you.

More Flight Offers & Information

	Economy	Business
Vietnam	£491#	£2,456~
Sri Lanka	£557†	£1,999†
Los Angeles	£562#	£2,885†
Maldives	£570†	£2,184†
New York	£583	£2,058‡
Tokyo	£585^	£2,399†
Cape Town	£665~	£2,499†
Sydney	£690~	£3,399^
Vancouver	£765~	£1,871◊
Auckland	£899^	£3,499†

CALL FOR ANY DESTINATION OR ROUTING

NO ONE LOOKS AFTER YOU BETTER

Prices are per person based on twin share including flights from London (call for details), are subject to availability & valid for selected departures in the next 6 weeks except ~8 - 30 Sep #1 Oct - 30 Nov ^1 Dec - 15 Dec 26 †7 Jan - 31 Mar 27 ◊1 Apr - 30 Jun 27 ‡July 27. *Price based on 2 adults & 2 children under 12 travelling. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Prices exclude any applicable local taxes and fees. All information correct at time of going to print on 30 Jul 26.

Travel

Page 47

‘A vast landscape of peaks, a scattering of snow in the distance and gleaming lakes’

Daniel Finkelstein takes a Club Med break in the Alps

COOLSTAYS

Ebba, Herefordshire

UK stays with wild swims

These cottages and cabins all offer the chance for a serene dip in a natural pool, pond or lake. By Rhiannon Batten

Two deer bound across the meadow as I arrive and when I reach the swimming pond a heron leaps from a branch at its edge. Slipping into the water, I begin a meditative loop, slicing steadily through shards of sunlight as the coolness quietens my mind. Pearly damselflies keep me company and so reflective is the water that it feels as though I’m swimming through a forest rather than simply paddling alongside the alders and oak trees that fringe the pool’s edge.

This was the scene at Oakhill Ponds, a pocket of spring-fed stillness in a busy corner of Somerset between Wells and Frome. The two large ponds were built more than two centuries ago as a reservoir for the long-gone Oakhill Brewery, artfully disguised as an Arcadian pleasure garden complete with 18th-century grotto.

While the lower pond is reserved for wildlife, the higher one has been opened as a swimming pond for guests staying in the handful of glamping rentals dotted around the 25-acre gardens, which are now a Zen-like nature retreat (restricted numbers of local swimming club members can use it at designated times too). The site has four Lotus Belle tents, a secret garden yurt and two handcrafted shepherd’s huts — one named after the poet Alice Oswald, the other Japanese-inspired, with a tiny rock garden, after the Japanese poet Chiyo-ni — with wood-fired hot tubs. There’s a library in a converted horse lorry and a sauna too. But the swimming here at Oakhill Ponds, like other options on this list, is key (two nights’ self-catering for two from £216; oakhillponds.co.uk).

Gosling Lodge, Devon

I’ve chosen cabins, cottages, shepherd’s huts, boathouses and floating pods, which all have access to a natural pool, swimming pond or private lake. In these cool,

Great stays next page

▶ often spring-fed bodies of water you are liberated from thoughts about pollution, tides, currents and litter. Instead bathing feels more like having a conversation with the landscape than thrashing through it.

Melodramatic? Possibly, but give one of the pools on this list a go and it might just have the same effect on you.

Barnscapes Farm
Guestling, East Sussex

Not the wellies and woodsmoke type? The seven minimalist apartments in this new collection in the High Weald are clean-lined and slick, with plywood walls, kitchens in colours plucked straight from a wildflower meadow and a mix of designer and vintage furniture. Each apartment sleeps between two and ten, and they can be booked together for group stays. A chemical-free 20-metre swimming pond is fed by rainwater from the roofs, while a wood-fired sauna overlooks reflective views of the sunset. Hastings and Rye are close by, or you could sip your way around the Rother Wine Triangle (sussexwinelands.com).

Details One night's self-catering for four from £145 (barnscapes.co.uk)

Mountain Cottage
Llithfaen, Gwynedd

Tucked into the hillside like a little stone chestnut in a husk of maple and sycamore trees, Mountain Cottage has infinite-scroll views of Cardigan Bay and a private spring-fed pool for jumpstarting desk-addled bodies. It is also equipped with a Tesla charger and a glossy walk-in shower. This wood-burner-warmed hideaway is owned by the Williams-Ellis family, whose forebear Clough created the madcap Italianate village of Portmeirion, a 40-minute drive away (£20; portmeirion.wales). It's also a handy spot for beach-hopping along the Llyn peninsula, where you can stroll to the Ty Coch Inn (tycoch.co.uk).

Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £1,064 (oysterholidaycottages.co.uk)

Berrywell
Penistone, South Yorkshire

You don't need a car to reach Berrywell, a leafy larch-clad retreat north of Sheffield: it's a 15-minute walk from Penistone station along the Trans Pennine Trail (transpennineTrail.org.uk). Less a cabin with a swimming pond and more a poolside garden you can sleep in, Berrywell is owned by the garden designer Will Tomson, whose time working in Japan influenced the build. Sauna sessions can be added on (one hour from £10), there's a small arthouse cinema in town and walks from the door lead into the foothills of the Dark Peak, the northern part of the Peak District, with a gritstone landscape.

Details One night's self-catering for two from £189 (airbnb.co.uk)

Ebba
Bryngwyn, Herefordshire

The three temple-like cabins at Ebba, two of which opened earlier this year, sit around their own private lake within a Japanese-style landscaped setting. Surrounded by tumbling rocks, glossy water and ferny hillsides, the dark-timbered retreats also have hand-carved stone baths for outdoor bathing, waterside fire pits, lakeside saunas and polished mini kitchens. Slide into the water to swim among darting dragonflies or drive 20 minutes to Hay-on-Wye to browse its bookshops and galleries.

Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £595 (coolstays.com)

The Kingfisher Houseboat, Pembrokeshire

The Lodge
Little Clacton, Essex

The two hand-built huts at the Lodge are all about restorative unwinding. Beds have windows at their feet so you'll wake up with front-row views over Essex farmland or the site's swimming pond, and both have private outdoor baths for warmer dips. There's no judgment if it's a bottle of wine you'd rather dive into, but if it's wellness you're after then private yoga classes, sauna bookings, massage treatments, breathwork, meditation, reiki, candlelit sound healing and guided cold-water therapy sessions can be added on. If you're driving, the beach is ten minutes away. And it's reachable from London in less than 90 minutes by train and on foot (it's a 25-minute walk from Thorpe-le-Soken station).

Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £410 (kiphideaways.com)

The Owl House, Monmouthshire

Loch Na Bo House
near Elgin, Moray

Home to a branch of the Tennant family for five generations, Loch Na Bo House has the feel of a pretty country pile its ageing laird has just tottered out of. It's old-fashioned in the best way, with windows draped with chintz, monogrammed bathrobes and a dining room table overlooked by family portraits. Within a private estate, the house has views of a 40-acre loch where you can plunge into the glassy, cool water then warm up in a smart lakeside sauna. The spectacular walled garden of Gordon Castle (£10.50; gordoncastle.com), Johnstons of Elgin mill experience (£15; johnstonsofelgin.com) and some of Scotland's finest distilleries are also on the doorstep (spiritofspeyside.com).

Details Three nights' self-catering for 12 from £2,870 (lochnabo.co.uk)

Brook Meadow
Sibbertoft, Leicestershire

Families have been visiting this farm-based campsite for three decades, lured in by pizza Saturdays, "moovie" nights in its cowshed cinema and a summer programme of guided runs, campfire singalongs, flower printing, pond-dipping and sunrise yoga. This summer it has launched beach club-style wild swimming in a section of its lake, with waterside deckchairs, a coffee van and, on certain dates, a pop-up sauna (three-day wild swimming pass from £15pp). There's a safari lodge, bell tent, cabin and Airstream caravan, and three cottage-like timber lodges. Kingfisher is a two-bedroom rejection of greige with a bright botanical mural and candy-tiled bathroom.

Details Four nights' self-catering for two from £480 (brookmeadow.co.uk)

The Dovecot
Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire

One for honeymooners, frazzled teachers and escaping parents, the Dovecot is the latest hideaway to open at the adults-only Roost Retreats, ~which has five one-bedroom cottages and cabins. There's a kingsize bed, an open-plan kitchen and living room, and all the tech you might need for a digital retox, plus a private courtyard with an infrared sauna, an outdoor shower and a pizza oven. In addition, Dovecot

CHRIS TANCOCK; GARY MILTON

Mountain Cottage, Gwynedd

Oakhill Ponds, Somerset

guests have a dedicated slice of meadow, with chairs and a fire pit, and allocated time slots in the natural pool are available. Dogs are so welcome there's an outdoor wellness station just for them, featuring a warm dog-wash, while cyclists tackling the Forest of Dean's trails can use the bike shed (forestryengland.uk).
Details Two nights' self-catering from £399 (theroostretreats.co.uk)

Wagtail Retreat
Moseley, Worcestershire

Just as the tail-bobbing birds after which this small vineyard glamping site is named are drawn to the water, so too are guests staying in its three colourful cabins. Each one-bedroom retreat has been designed by the owners, James and Chloe Deakin, to maximise views over the Malvern Hills. Larch is the closest to the emerald lake at the site's heart but Gooseberry and Hedgehog are only a few steps further away, among wildflower meadows and fields. It's a 30-minute walk to the local pub and a 15-minute drive into Worcester, but stay on site and you can follow a swim with a sauna or soak (Gooseberry has a hot tub while the other two have outdoor baths). Then get stuck into a pre-ordered local cheese plate and Wagtail's own wines.
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £400 (kiphideaways.com)

Mirana
Constantine, Cornwall

Olive trees in terracotta pots and low-slung architecture wrapped in glass and pale wood hint at beachy Mediterranean holidays but this two-bedroom rental is deeply Cornish. Hewn from 19th-century barns near the Helford River on the Lizard peninsula, it's backed by beech woods dwelt in by barn owls, deer and glow-worms, and is close to the village of Constantine and the inspirational Potager Garden, with its pip-to-plate café (potagergarden.org). The centrepiece is a smart gravel garden built around a serene slick of a natural pool and fringed with native reeds and grasses, a wood-fired hot tub and Finnish sauna.
Details Four nights' self-catering for four from £1,495 (uniquehomestays.com)

The Kingfisher Houseboat Lawrenny, Pembrokeshire

Everything revolves around the water at this cabin by the lake's edge, one of a trio of self-contained stays on a family farm. Timber panelling the colour of a banana smoothie, a shower lined with corrugated metal and a veranda with a hammock overlooking the water set a surf-shack tone, while a ladder leads into the lake for easy-access swims or paddles (a Canadian dugout canoe is provided). Wander out to spot wildlife around the Cleddau estuary or get some sand between your toes at some of the county's best beaches: Freshwater East and Tenby are within a 30-minute drive.
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £300 (coolstays.com)

Gosling Lodge
Bradninch, Devon

Switching off is made easy at this hand-built timber cabin. Just off the M5 north of Exeter it's set within a rewilded landscape, and with its patchy phone signal and no wifi you can go the full *Walden*. Sink into a slower pace around the cabin's private pond, splashing about in the rowing boat, swimming, watching moorhens from the veranda or spending cooler nights reading by the wood-burning stove. If cabin fever kicks in, have a gander round Killerton House, 20 minutes' drive away — it's home to the National Trust's biggest fashion collection (nationaltrust.org.uk).
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £290 (canopyandstars.co.uk)

The Owl House
Abergavenny, Monmouthshire

Putting a Cambrian twist on hill-station style, this single-storey retreat in Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park has a barley-twist four-poster in the master bedroom, shisha embroidery wall hangings in the second bedroom, a garden entered via an antique Gujarati door and a softly lit veranda set up with a gleaming copper bath. One of six soulful holiday rentals at Wern-y-Cwm Farm, it has walks straight from the door up Skirrid Mountain, hot stone massages to be booked on site and a reed-fringed natural swimming pool.
Details One night's self-catering for two from £150 (wonderfulescapes.co.uk)

Ditchling Cabin
Hassocks, East Sussex

Many waterside rental properties don't allow children but this timber-lined cabin, set by a private lake in the South Downs National Park, is an exception. While younger visitors obviously need careful supervision, it's well set up for families bringing competent young swimmers, with two full-size bunk beds, as well as an emperor bed, a fire pit for toasting marshmallows, board games, wifi and a choice of rowing boat, raft, canoe and paddleboard. If the weather turns, there's hot chocolate in the kitchen, a hot tub on the deck and wetsuits to borrow. Or drive 15 minutes into Brighton to dip into a bit of city life.
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £1,390 (ditchlingcabin.com)

One Cat Farm
Aberaeron, Ceredigion

Even the dragonflies would give five-star reviews to this cabin retreat in the far west of Wales. Since the owners, Jessie and Lyndon Roberts-Duffey, started taking a regenerative approach to the land around their four cabins, biodiversity has blossomed on the three-acre site, in turn attracting an influx of guests looking to slow down and reconnect to nature. Many do that by gently dunking themselves in the pond at the centre of the site. Others head out to beach-hop between Cardigan Bay's quiet coves. Those in the know book an outdoor bath and stargaze through the steam (from £45pp).
Details Two nights' self-catering for up to five from £268 (onecatfarm.com)

Hill Top Farm
Penny Bridge, Cumbria

Not to be confused with Beatrix Potter's similarly named former Lakeland retreat 30 minutes' drive north (nationaltrust.org.uk), this 18th-century farmhouse near Ulverston has been designed with multigenerational gatherings in mind. Sleeping up to 16 across the main house and an attached barn (which has its own kitchen), the property has a flagstoned kitchen, a games loft for ping pong, table football, darts and pool, vegetable beds and chickens. It's a good spot for farm-to-fork foraging, with a veranda to sit on for dinners with a view and a natural swimming pool for dips after days spent hiking, kayaking or paddleboarding around nearby Coniston.
Details Three nights' self-catering for sixteen from £1,218 (altounyan.com)

Dunkirk Farm House
Ilkley, West Yorkshire

Opened in July on the regenerative Denton Reserve estate in West Yorkshire near Ilkley, the house has three bedrooms and a sparse elegance that mirrors its moorland surroundings. A 30-minute walk from the estate's other cottages, cabins and the grand grade I listed hall, it shares access to a lake and sauna with Dunkirk Barn. Hike to the estate's pub with rooms, the Penny Bun, for a post-swim rack of Denton lamb or salads plucked straight from the estate's walled garden.
Details Three nights' self-catering for six from £1,350 (dentonreserve.co.uk)

Tiny Home Borders
Hawick, Scottish Borders

This farm introduced its first cabin in 2022, and its recipe for cosseting decompression was such a success that a second was created in 2025, with plans under way for a third. The two tiny off-grid homes have their own private lochan and wood-fired hot tub. The latest one also has a sauna. Dryburgh Abbey (£7.50; historicenvironment.scot), the Mary Queen of Scots' Visitor Centre (free; liveborders.org.uk), Borders Textile Towerhouse (free; liveborders.org.uk), and the Borders Distillery (tours £20pp;

More stays next page

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Exclusive free pre-night for The Times Readers

Plus save up to £400 per person^

15 DAYS FROM
£4,590*
per person

Pearls of the Philippines

February 2027 to November 2028

Discover the Philippines, an extraordinary archipelago where dramatic mountain landscapes, colonial history and tropical paradise come together. From the ancient rice terraces of Banaue to Bohol's iconic Chocolate Hills and the pristine beauty of Palawan, this journey reveals the country's rich heritage, diverse cultures and spectacular natural wonders.

Fly overnight to Manila, the bustling capital of the Philippines. Begin your adventure soaking up the local culture before exploring the historic walled city of Intramuros and the lively district of Las Piñas, home to traditional crafts and the unique Jeepney Museum.

Journey north into the spectacular Cordillera Mountains to admire the ancient, hand-carved rice terraces of Mayoyao and Hapao. Immerse yourself in indigenous Ifugao culture with local school visits and a traditional rice wine-making demonstration, then head to Sagada to witness the mysterious Hanging Coffins.

Fly south to tropical Bohol to marvel at the iconic Chocolate Hills, cruise the scenic Loboc River, and visit a sanctuary for the tiny Philippine tarsier. After a hands-on cocoa farm experience, catch a ferry to Cebu to discover its rich colonial history. Finally, fly to Palawan to cruise the breathtaking Underground River, island-hop around idyllic Honda Bay, and enjoy a farewell rooftop dinner back in Manila before flying home to the UK.

Price includes

- International flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation
- 12 nights in three plus / four-star accommodation
- 13 breakfasts, 11 lunches and 13 dinners
- Exclusive free pre-tour extension including hotel night, breakfast and private transfers – quote TIMES-ON when booking
- Touring with guides and entrance fees

What we love

Visit a local cocoa farm to learn about traditional chocolate production and take part in a hands-on chocolate-making experience.

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

CALL TODAY ON
0808 134 8414
thetimes.com/ww-philippines
QUOTE TIMES-ON^

Our trusted partner

Wendy Wu Tours | ABTA Travel with confidence

*Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Flights on holidays booked more than 11 months in advance may be subject to supplements when airline fares are published. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Wendy Wu, ABTA W7994 ATOL 6639, a company wholly independent of News UK. ^The offer is subject to availability and Wendy Wu Tours reserve the right to change or withdraw the offer. Offer discount already applied, book by August 31, 2026.

▶ thebordersdistillery.com) are all on the doorstep.
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £384 (tinyhomeborders.co.uk)

The Boathouse
Tomich, Highland

Bashful swimmers are in luck at this modern, bothy-like cabin on the Guisachan Estate. A couple of miles from the estate's hub, it is secluded and near a small loch you can swim in. Sheepskin-covered recliners and a wood-burning stove reflect its off-grid setting. Power is provided by a small wind turbine and solar panels but the toilet is composting and you'll have to let your locks dry naturally after a dip, as hairdryers are forbidden. Return from days spent hiking or mountain-biking to birdwatch from the wraparound balcony or waterside hot tub.
Details Three nights' self-catering for two from £900 (tomich-holidays.co.uk)

Dragonfly Cabin Dry
Drayton, Cambridgeshire

At this romantic timber-clad cabin, with its swish little shower room and dinky but thoughtfully designed kitchen, continental breakfast is included in the rates, but Aga-cooked breakfasts, ploughman's platters and slow-cooked chilli can also be ordered. One of three rentals on a peaceful farm, Dragonfly is perched so close to the site's swimming pond that you can go from pillow to pool in under ten paces (other guests have swimming access only between 11am and 5pm). There's a wood-fired sauna a few minutes' walk away and ebikes for hire if you fancy pedalling along the five-mile cycle path that leads into Cambridge.
Details Two nights' B&B for two from £340 (kiphideaways.com)

Hole Mill
Branscombe, Devon

Stays at this stylishly renovated 350-year-old watermill turned holiday let centre on the 3m-deep swimming pond in its two-acre garden. In summer, children cannonball in from the jetty to take the edge off the heat, while in winter, swimmers book in to get their cold-water fix. Recommendations on local river and sea-swimming spots are provided and there's a wood-fired hot tub (additional charge) if you're more of a fair-water dipper. Five roomy bedrooms are decorated in soothing shades of stone and buttermilk.
Details Three nights' self-catering for eleven from £2,290 (holemill.co.uk)

The Boathouse, Highland

Lilypod
Okehampton, Devon

Not just close to a lake but floating above it, the three wood-and-glass geodesic domes at the adults-only Lilypod in west Devon come with kitchens, wood-burning stoves, en suite bathrooms and from-the-pillow views of starry skies, plus overwater hammocks and Canadian canoes. Make like the local beavers and herons, starting your day with a dip in the waterfall-fed waters of the former lime quarry. Then return to your pod for coffee on the deck before heading out to find the waterfall at Lydford, the deepest gorge in the southwest (nationaltrust.org.uk), joining a wine tour and tasting at the Alder Vineyard (aldervineyard.uk) or pedalling out from the Granite Way Cycle Hub (granitewaycycles.co.uk).
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £440 (lilypod.uk)

Kiri Cottage
Penrith, Cumbria

Water babies are well catered for at this two-bedroom former blacksmith's cottage, one of a clutch of rental properties on the Edenhall Estate. Inky blue walls, a clawfoot bath and vintage packing cases whisper refined rather than rustic, but stays here are all about embracing the wild. The estate's lake is three minutes' walk away and there's a swimmable stretch of the River Eden a little further on, where ranger-led swimming and paddleboarding sessions can be followed by soaks in a riverbank hot tub (Wet and Wild activity packages from £75pp).
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £490 (edenhallestate.com)

Lilypod, Devon

Coruanan Farmhouse
Fort William, Highland

Even doing the washing-up is an immersive nature experience at this secluded three-bedroom, modern-looking farmhouse on the shores of Loch Linnhe: the window above the sink looks out onto heather-clad hills. Pretty botanical wallpapers, pink tongue-and-groove panelling and a wood-fired hot tub add cosiness, and it also comes with shared access to a riverside cabin for picnicking in style on sheepskins. For many guests, though, the clincher is the small private swimming pond five minutes' walk from the house.
Details Three nights' self-catering for six from £1,230 (boutique-retreats.co.uk)

Patty's Barn
Cockerham, Lancashire

Popular with friends and families who want to holiday together but not necessarily share the same property, this collection of 13 cottages and cabins by the saltmarshes south of Lancaster sleep between two and nine, and have access to a shared games room, gym, football and rugby pitches and fishing, plus add-ons such as yoga classes, wood-fired hot tubs and farm feasts. Noise from a small neighbouring airfield is minimal and there's a wildlife-friendly approach: the site's nature trail has been mapped in collaboration with Lancashire Wildlife Trust, and there's a dedicated wild swimming pond fed by an underwater spring. Walk out to Cockersand Abbey, book for Sunday lunch at the Bay Horse Inn (bayhorseinn.com), or sink ales and street food at Farm Yard Brew Co (farmyardbrew.co.uk).
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £260 (pattysbarn.co.uk)

Combe Head House
Chard, Somerset

Close to Dorset and Devon, on the fringes of the wild-edged Blackdown Hills (blackdownhils.org.uk), Combe Head House is a 16th-century manor house with a Victorian swimming pond and a handful of holiday cottages scattered among its eight acres of orchards, meadows, gardens and woodland. Bespoke Neal's Yard massages can be booked in a wild spa, and sound baths and saunas can be added on. Breakfasts can be upgraded with sausages and bacon from the owners' rare-breed pigs, while you're close to two of Somerset's best pubs, the Cotley Inn (cotleyinn.co.uk) and Candlelight Inn (candlelightinn.co.uk), plus farm shop foraging (barleymowsfarmshop.co.uk). The Old Lodge is the closest cottage to the pond for quiet dawn dips.
Details Two nights' self-catering for six from £680 (combeheadhouse.com)

Supernova
Bosham, West Sussex

When this Chichester showstopper appeared on *Grand Designs* five years ago it became the poster girl for a more urbane take on natural pools, prompting homeowners across the country to start dreaming of their own chemical-free swoosh. Only a few may have been able to afford to follow up on the idea but you can at least stay in the house that started it all. Apart from being able to step through the kitchen's sliding doors and be in the water in milliseconds, the larch and glass house comes with a tennis court, art studio, sculpture trail and more frills than Harry Styles's wardrobe (sleek stoneware baths and Quooker taps among them).
Details Seven nights' self-catering for up to ten from £12,967 (oliverstravels.com)

Luxury Algarve

Portugal's secret coast has two cool new hotels

Costa Vicentina is known for surfing and hiking — and now places to stay with great food. By Amelia Duggan

As any good hiker knows, trail etiquette dictates a cheerful greeting for fellow travellers, and there's no exception among pilgrims in southwest Portugal's Costa Vicentina, about a 90-minute drive from Faro. "Almost there!" one encourages me, struggling with his backpack. "Gorgeous day," huffs another.

They're heading over wildflower-strewn headlands and wave-pounded beaches towards hostel bunk beds in a fishing village, where I imagine they'll compare blister treatments over communal pasta. I give them a comradely thumbs-up and watch them go, then turn down a different path entirely. One that ends, as it happens, at a rather good sauna.

Eschewing both the long-distance trails and surf breaks for which this pristine, nearly 70-mile coastline is best known, I've instead come to enjoy two pioneering new hotels at the western edge of the Algarve, 20 minutes apart by car. Amaria, near the village of Odeceixe, and Vale Palheiro Earth Resort, outside the town of Aljezur, represent the first upmarket boutique propositions in the Southwest Alentejo and Costa Vicentina Natural Park for travellers who prefer their wilderness to come with a high thread count.

"When I arrive from Lisbon, come down the valley and see this, I just exhale," Madalena Rutkowski says, dropping her shoulders for effect. "I fall in love with the place all over again."

Rutkowski is an architect and she and her husband, Pedro, are behind Vale Palheiro. It took them 14 years to realise the 13-key retreat with a mix of suites, casitas and villas which opened in August last year. "This part of Portugal has been a well-kept secret for a long time. Preserved by its natural park status, now people are definitely getting curious," she says.

The approach to the property is indeed gorgeous. Exiting the narrow lanes of Aljezur onto a bumpy track, the resort ahead could be a trick of the shadows in an emerald valley snaking towards the sheen of the ocean. Drawing closer, it looks as if the couple have created a hamlet: a charming jumble of ochre walls, chimneys, schist stonework and aged terracotta tiles, built into the slope. A dark saltwater pool awaits in a lush lawn, not far from a stream; beyond the stables and chicken coop, goats and sheep are tending to a pasture.

"It was important to us to create something in harmony with the landscape, that feels like it was always here," Rutkowski explains, justifying her ambitious decision to build with the dying regional technique of *taipa* — using rammed earth for construction, a style dating back millennia. "It was hard to find the right artisans," she confesses.

The property shows off its ecological bones with artistic cut-outs in the painted plaster, the russet *taipa* walls revealed, flecked with pebbles and roots.

I check into my duplex villa, which is vast — more like a hayloft than a hotel room. A sunken lounge with a fireplace leads out to a terrace with sweeping views east, the 12th-century ruins of Aljezur castle in the distance. A double-height reception area offers a neat kitchenette — microwave, fridge, earthenware crockery — should I wish to whip up something with produce from Aljezur's market. On the mezzanine, an ample bed spread with crisp Portuguese linens faces onto a roomy glass shower.

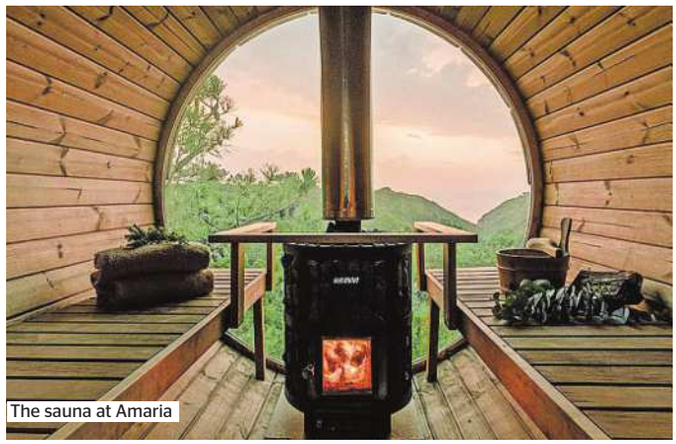
The decor embraces the organic: granite-hued microcement floors retain phantom swirls of craftsmanship, as do the lightly textured walls. Antique sideboards and knotted rugs give the space a lived-in feel. Otherwise, the lines are contemporary: industrial-chic shutters, crisp white rafters. The same is true of the Barn restaurant, at the heart of the property, where a focused menu rotates with the seasons, and the small spa with a sauna and treatment room below it. "Every window and door frames the landscape like a picture," Rutkowski says.

Opened in July 2023, the white farmhouse complex that makes up Amaria is pure Mediterranean daydream. Eleven sun-filled suites and one three-bedroom apartment gaze through diaphanous drapes and walls of glass onto a landscaped

Need to know

Amelia Duggan was a guest of Vale Palheiro Earth Resort, which has B&B doubles from £206 (valepalheiro.com), and Amaria, which has B&B doubles from £181 (amaria.pt). Fly to Faro

Praia de Odeceixe, Costa Vicentina


The sauna at Amaria

A suite at Amaria

ALAMY; DANIEL ESPIRITO SANTO; KOPIEREN

wilderness woven with nooks: a yoga deck, a fire pit, an outdoor summer kitchen; a vegetable garden and an organic vineyard, too, now producing its first vintages.

The ocean is at the periphery, beyond tall cliffs — an idyllic backdrop to the lap pool, tucked into a glade and burnished every sunset.

"I've lost track of how many trees I've planted; perhaps 2,000," Nuno Oliveira tells me on a walk through the rewilded property he bought a decade ago. "And 8,000 plants. What you put in the land here, it grows."

Like Vale Palheiro, Amaria sits atop the ruins of a humble farm — it was that blueprint of existing foundations that enabled Oliveira, previously a mechanical engineer in Lisbon, to build something new within the natural park. Impressive environmental technologies, from solar panels to cork insulation, still had to be employed, but they're not something you'd ever notice as a guest.

There's a simplicity to the design, but the effect is luxurious. The indoor communal spaces — the Library and Cantina — have perfected a pared-back, contemporary aesthetic that also borrows from old country estates: white walls are a soothing canvas against which antiques, deep sofas, interior design volumes and vases of foliage add personality.

When the afternoon sunlight casts soft shadows, it feels like a still life painting. My bedroom is all muted elegance, with a freestanding tub, a wood-burning stove and a garden-level patio from which to soak up the views.

"Here, you feel completely at home yet disconnected from the world," Oliveira says, with the contented smile of a man who's left the hustle of city life behind him. His British wife, the former fashion editor

> "When I arrive from Lisbon, come down the valley and see this, I just exhale. I fall in love with the place all over again

Phoebe Arnold, oversees the restaurant. Playing hostess from the open-plan kitchen, she whips up cakes and presses drinks into hands, offering recommendations for exploring the area, all while creating each day's menu from scratch, based on the best local produce.

Dinner is a convivial, candlelit affair where conversation sparks between tables. We feast on burrata and clementines, beef carpaccio with capers, and sea bream with asparagus and beurre blanc — all sourced on site or within a few miles. At some point Arnold brings round a bottle of medronho, Algarvian firewater — it all gets a little hazy after that.

On warm evenings, these dinners move outside under the stars; chef collaborations, yoga lessons and ceramics workshops are all on the summer schedule too.

Breakfast the next morning is everything from poached pears to fresh pastries. Outside, the hotel is blissfully quiet but for birdsong and the hiss of the ocean.

The sauna is also being fired up for me — a spectacular glass-backed affair that gazes out across forested cliffs and hidden hiking trails to the endless Atlantic — delivering what I suspect might be Portugal's most scenic hangover cure.

What to see and where to eat in Aljezur and the Costa Vicentina

What to see and do

In a region of tranquil and sparse communities, the cultural epicentre of the Costa Vicentina is Aljezur, a whitewashed town with its roots in the 10th century. The remains of a Moorish castle sit brooding atop a hill; for historians, the small Museu Municipal (£2; cm-aljezur.pt) has a room devoted to the region's 500 years under Islamic rule, which ended in the mid-13th century.

Stop at the noticeboard outside the funky Moagem café (@moagem_aljezur on Instagram) to pick up flyers for reiki, shamanic breathwork, family constellations and more — Aljezur has long been home to an alternative community of free spirits. Rub shoulders with them over oat flat whites at Koyo (koyospecialitycoffees.com), vegan fare at Roots (from £4; @roots_aljezur on Instagram) and fresh pizzas at Arte Bianca (from £8; artebianca.pt).

On Saturday mornings, a great little farmers' market in front of the church in the New Town brings the community together in a celebration of Algarvian produce, from herbs and honey to sourdough and sweet potatoes. The last are so prized they're practically the town mascot; they're celebrated each October/November harvest with three raucous days of cooking and live music (festival-batatadoce.cm-aljezur.pt). The hiking trails of the Rota Vicentina lace this region together, travelling between sandy clifftops, pine forests and sleepy villages on waymarked routes suited to all levels of experience, so packing walking shoes is a must (rotavicentina.com). The 13-stage Fisherman's Trail hugs the coast most closely, with Arrifana's black schist cliffs and the crescent beach at Odeceixe among its most dramatic passages.

These are some of Portugal's most striking beaches: hit the waves with Arrifana Surf School (two-hour group lesson from £46pp, including board and wetsuit; arrifanasurfschool.com) or try stand-up paddling on the glassy Seixe River just before it spills into the ocean at Odeceixe beach (£9 an hour for board hire; water-element.pt). For those who prefer to experience nature from the saddle, Carrapateira Extreme (*pictured top*) runs horse rides through the dunes and over the cliffs around Carrapateira village, with storytelling from the guide Nelson Inacio, who spent his boyhood exploring the area (one-hour tours from £52pp; carrapateiraextreme.com).

Take it up a notch with Natura Tours, who run four-wheel-drive excursions into the forested Monchique mountains or to Cabo de Sao Vicente, continental Europe's southwesternmost point, where the sunset draws a small crowd each evening (four-hour tours from £39pp; naturatours.pt).

At Monte Clerigo beach, Rock and Reel's 90-minute tidepool safaris are a reliable hit for families, offering insightful interactions with the octopuses, anemones and periwinkles that colonise the shore's rocky platforms at low tide (90 minutes from £26pp; rockandreelfishing.com).

The ocean guides Cristian Perez and Marzena Saka are brilliant teachers and can also take groups out to a spray-blasted islet for a half-day of traditional Portuguese line fishing (four hours from £103pp; rockandreelfishing.com).

Where to eat

CAL, Arrifana

The chef Susana Felicidade grew up watching her grandmother run a seaside restaurant; she went on to build a Lisbon empire before returning in 2022 to open her own atop the sheer cliffs of Arrifana. CAL's sea-view terraces, framed by low whitewashed walls and animated by a cast of surfers, make the setting hard to fault. The cooking's just as good — sharing dishes rooted in local produce, chalked up on blackboard menus. Favourites include the cuttlefish stew and the razor clams served with creamy rice (mains from £17; @cal.arrifana on Instagram).

O Sargo, Monte Clerigo

With its dune-blotted beach and cascade of paintbox cottages, the hamlet of Monte Clerigo looks like an unlikely candidate for a lively night out, but O Sargo serves just that. Live music on Tuesday and Friday evening lights up the laid-back restaurant-bar, where sun-bleached decking, an outdoor grill and funky Edison bulbs give the impression of a grown-up surf shack. The seafood-forward menu is at its most fun when riffing on Asian dishes like nasi goreng fried rice and tuna tataki with ponzu-dressed salad (mains from £14; restauranteosargo.pt).

Pont'a Pe, Aljezur

A beloved Aljezur institution that specialises in Portuguese fare done well, Pont'a Pe (*pictured above*) is all about regionality — tender octopus on sweet potatoes, stewed black pork cheeks and a steamed seafood cataplana served in a traditional copper clamshell pot are some of the house specials. A century back, this was a riverside inn catering to merchants; with its exposed rafters and rustic decor, little seems to have changed (mains from £13; pontape.pt).

Where else to stay

Praia do Canal Nature Retreat, Vale dos Polvos

The only other high-end proposition within the Southwest Alentejo and Costa Vicentina Natural Park, Praia do Canal arrived on the scene in 2022. With 56 rooms across a 220-hectare private estate, it operates at a different scale to its neighbours yet manages to retain a sense of soul. Low sand-hued buildings seem to rise organically from the scrubland; inside, driftwood, hewn stone and locally sourced materials keep things grounded. At the sleek flagship restaurant Azeitona, ingredients do all the talking — as with the standout dish of purple prawns with ajo blanco, almonds, grapes and malagueta chilli (B&B doubles from £207; praiadocanal.pt).

The Lemon Lodge, Aljezur

The collective dream of two Dutch couples who converted a traditional farmhouse near Aljezur, the Lemon Lodge is entirely off-grid — solar-powered, well-watered, wood-fired — and run according to permaculture principles. Two rustic-chic suites (a double and a family room sleeping four) each have a fireplace, open-plan kitchen and valley-facing terrace. The more adventurous can opt for a secluded glamping set-up for two with an outdoor kitchen and natural pond. Check the schedule for yoga, cold-water immersion and healing workshops (room-only doubles from £49; thelemonlodge.com).

Aldeia da Pedralva, Vila do Bispo

Two decades ago, this rural hamlet near Vila do Bispo had nine inhabitants and 50 houses collapsing into ruin. Rather than let it disappear, the new owner embarked on a restoration using traditional techniques. The result — 24 comfortable one to three-bedroom cottages arranged along cobbled lanes — is an unhurried community, presided over by a restaurant serving rural classics including bacalhau and black pork skewers (room-only doubles from £52; aldeiadapedralva.com).

Amelia Duggan

New, unmissable fares, plus

Up to US $530 on board credit included*

Plus, exclusive 10% saving for returning guests^

Cunard Signature Packages
Drinks/Wi-Fi/Dining Credit fr. £60pp per day

Across the Atlantic to Radiant Rio

29 nights | 10 January 2027
Full Board on Queen Anne
Saling from Southampton

Inside Stateroom fr. £3,059pp | Balcony Stateroom fr. £4,059pp

Up to US$530 on board credit per stateroom

No local tax required.

Canary Islands Winter Escape

12 nights | 4 February 2027
Full Board on Queen Elizabeth
Saling from Southampton

Inside Stateroom fr. £1,149pp | Balcony Stateroom fr. £1,499pp

Up to US$300 on board credit per stateroom

No local tax required.

Southampton to New York Classic Transatlantic Voyage

7 nights | 16 July 2027
Full Board on Queen Mary 2
Saling from Southampton / Fly back to UK

Inside Stateroom fr. £1,569pp | Balcony Stateroom fr. £2,039pp

Up to US$250 on board credit per stateroom

No local tax required.

Majestic Norwegian Fjords

7 nights | 29 August 2027
Full Board on Queen Anne
Saling from Southampton

Inside Stateroom fr. £899pp | Balcony Stateroom fr. £1,149pp

Up to US$250 on board credit per stateroom

No local tax required.

THE UK'S LARGEST INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AGENT **Nobody offers you more** ✓Service ✓Value ✓Choice ABTA

Hays Travel

Visit your local Hays Travel branch
Call Centre open 7 days
9am-10pm on 0800 098 3534
haystravel.co.uk

Winner British Travel Awards 2025 Best Travel Agency for Cruise Holidays
Winner British Travel Awards 2025 Best National Travel Retailer
Trustpilot

Which? January 2026 Recommended Provider High Street Travel Agents

Terms and Conditions apply. *Book any voyage included in the offer between 23 July 2026 and 31 August 2026 to take advantage of a 10% booking reduction. Offer applies to guests who have previously sailed with Cunard making a new Cunard Fare or Early Saver Fare voyages of 7 to 67 nights departing between 1 January 2027 and 31 March 2028. Discount applies to the cruise fare and Cunard Signature Packages only and does not apply to flights or holiday package add-ons. This offer is exclusive to you and cannot be transferred. Your Cunard World Club number must be quoted to receive this promotion. Offer is combinable with our current on-board spending money promotion when booking Cunard Fare. Offer is not combinable with Blue Light Card and Partnership Benefits. Voyages included in the Offer are subject to availability and may change at any time. Cunard reserves the right to amend or withdraw this Offer at any time. *Complimentary on board credit is valid on selected voyages of seven nights or more and applies to the first two passengers sharing a stateroom. On board credit is non-refundable and non-transferable. On board credit varies by stateroom and duration booked. On board credit shown is based on a Balcony Stateroom. Cunard Signature Packages are optional add-ons for eligible voyages, purchasable at time of booking and packages must be purchased for all eligible guests in a stateroom. Further terms and conditions apply. Prices correct at time of print. E&OE.

TIMES Travel *Partner*

11 DAYS NOW FROM
£2,592
per person

SAVE UP TO 15%* BOOK BY SEP 30

Uzbekistan – Ancient Cities of the Silk Road

October 2026 to October 2028

Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Discovery awaits along the fabled Silk Road where the region's colourful history meets Uzbekistan's rapidly developing metropolises.

Immerse yourself in a city of contrasts as you touch down in Tashkent with ancient Timurid and Islamic influences on full display just a short walk from its energetic new districts. Take to Unesco-listed Khiva and Bukhara, which boast some of the oldest and best-preserved landmarks in Central Asia.

Onwards to Samarkand, explore the ornate madrassas (religious colleges) of the ancient seat of the Timurid empire and witness its domed skyline at sunset. As your tour comes to a close, take a moment to appreciate authentic Uzbek culture with a day trip to Konigil Tourism village where you'll see the region's craftsmanship still very much alive.

Kalyan Mosque, Uzbekistan

Khiva, Uzbekistan

Price includes

- Nine night's mixed-board accommodation in Tashkent (three nights), Khiva (one night), Bukhara (three nights) and Samarkand (two nights)
- Visits to Tashkent, Khiva, Kyzyl-Kym, Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, Samarkand, and Konigil Tourism Village
- Return flights to Urgench and from Tashkent
- Comfortable coach travel and transfers throughout
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- Local taxes and applicable fees

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

CALL TODAY ON
0808 115 0710
thetimes.com/nh-uzbekistan
QUOTE TIM

*Save up to 15% applies to select tour bookings made by September 30, 2026 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. Offer applies to select tours only and cannot be combined with any other offer. Exclusions apply. Prices shown include discount. Single supplements apply. Prices correct at time of print. Subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time. These holidays are organised and operated by Newmarket Holidays Ltd, a company wholly independent of News UK. ABTOT 5509. ATOL protected 2325. ABTA V7812. Standard phone charges apply.

ABTOT Member 5509 | ABTA Travel with confidence

Your call answered in 3 rings

020·7962·9933

DialAFlight

Your travel. Personally crafted

SUNSHINE GETAWAYS

dialaflight.com

Domes Novos Santorini 5*

Save 25%+ free half board

This luxurious sanctuary is sculpted from its volcanic legacy

5 nights fr £859pp
Flights & hotel

The Bay Club at Anahita 5*

Save 30%

Set among 213 hectares of tropical gardens on Mauritius' East coast

7 nights fr £1,569pp
Flights & hotel

Anantara Koh Yao Yai 5*

Save 45%

Tranquillity & luxury on a lush island in the middle of Phang Nga Bay

7 nights fr £1,399pp
Flights, hotel & transfers

One&Only Reethi Rah Maldives 5*

Save 20% + free half board
Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £6,059pp

The Ritz-Carlton Tenerife, Abama 5*

Save 20%

Spilling down the slopes of Mount Teide to a gorgeous exclusive beach

7 nights fr £955pp
Flights & hotel

COOL CARIBBEAN

dialaflight.com

W Punta Cana, Dominican Republic 5*

Save 50% on all inclusive
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £2,075pp

Curtain Bluff, Antigua 5*

Save 25% on all inclusive

An elegant, charming & award-winning Relais & Chateaux hotel

7 nights fr £3,819pp
Flights & hotel

BodyHoliday St Lucia 5*

Save 30% on all inclusive
Flights, hotel & treatments - 7 nights fr £2,859pp

The Sands At Grace Bay 4*

Save 10%

A luxury resort nestled on beautiful Grace Bay Beach, Turks & Caicos

7 nights fr £2,045pp
Flights & hotel

Little Good Harbour Barbados 4*

Save 35%

A family-run hotel set in lush gardens, with a renowned gourmet restaurant

7 nights fr £1,349pp
Flights & hotel

CANADA

See the best of the west with this exciting fly drive adventure in the Canadian Rockies

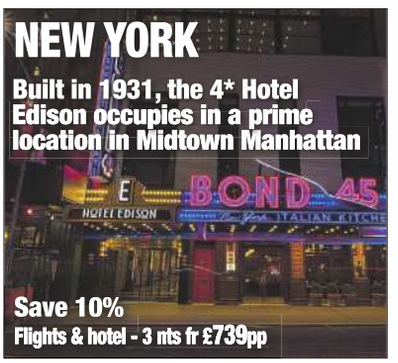
Save £150
Flights, hotels & car hire - 13 nts fr £2,875pp

MARRAKECH

Close to the legendary Jamâa el Fna square is the 5* Hivernage Hotel & Spa

Save 10%
Flights & hotel - 7 nts fr £859pp

NEW YORK



Built in 1931, the 4* Hotel Edison occupies in a prime location in Midtown Manhattan

Save 10%
Flights & hotel - 3 nts fr £739pp

TEMPTING TOURS

Japan

Save £300

From temples to tempura, shrines to sashimi, seafood markets to sake breweries, take your taste-buds on a culinary journey through Japan's most delicious hotspots.

Flights, hotels & transfers
10 nights fr £4,125pp

India

Save £500 FB

Live like a Maharaja on this wonderful tour on board the Palace on Wheels train. This fascinating journey takes you to the heart of Rajasthan & the Taj Mahal at Agra.

Flights, train & transfers
7 nights fr £6,539pp

New Zealand

Save £500

Travelling by luxury coach, this tour starts in Christchurch and ends in Auckland, taking in the Bay of Islands, Rotorua's geysers and the Southern Alps.

Flights, hotels, train, cruise & transfers
18 nights fr £6,979pp

S. America

Save £150

The ultimate trip of South America starts with Rio's iconic sights, the spectacular Iguassu Falls and finishes in the Argentinean city of Buenos Aires.

Flights, hotels, tours & transfers
8 nights fr £3,369pp

Africa

Save £250

Begin your safari adventures at the iconic Masai Mara, before continuing to the awe-inspiring Mount Kilimanjaro. Cross into Tanzania, then fly to Zanzibar for 5 nights.

Flights, hotels & transfers
16 nights fr £4,695pp

CLIENT TRUST ACCOUNT

ATOL Protected

ABTA
ABTA No 76705

98% Rate us EXCELLENT
Trustpilot
15,515 reviews

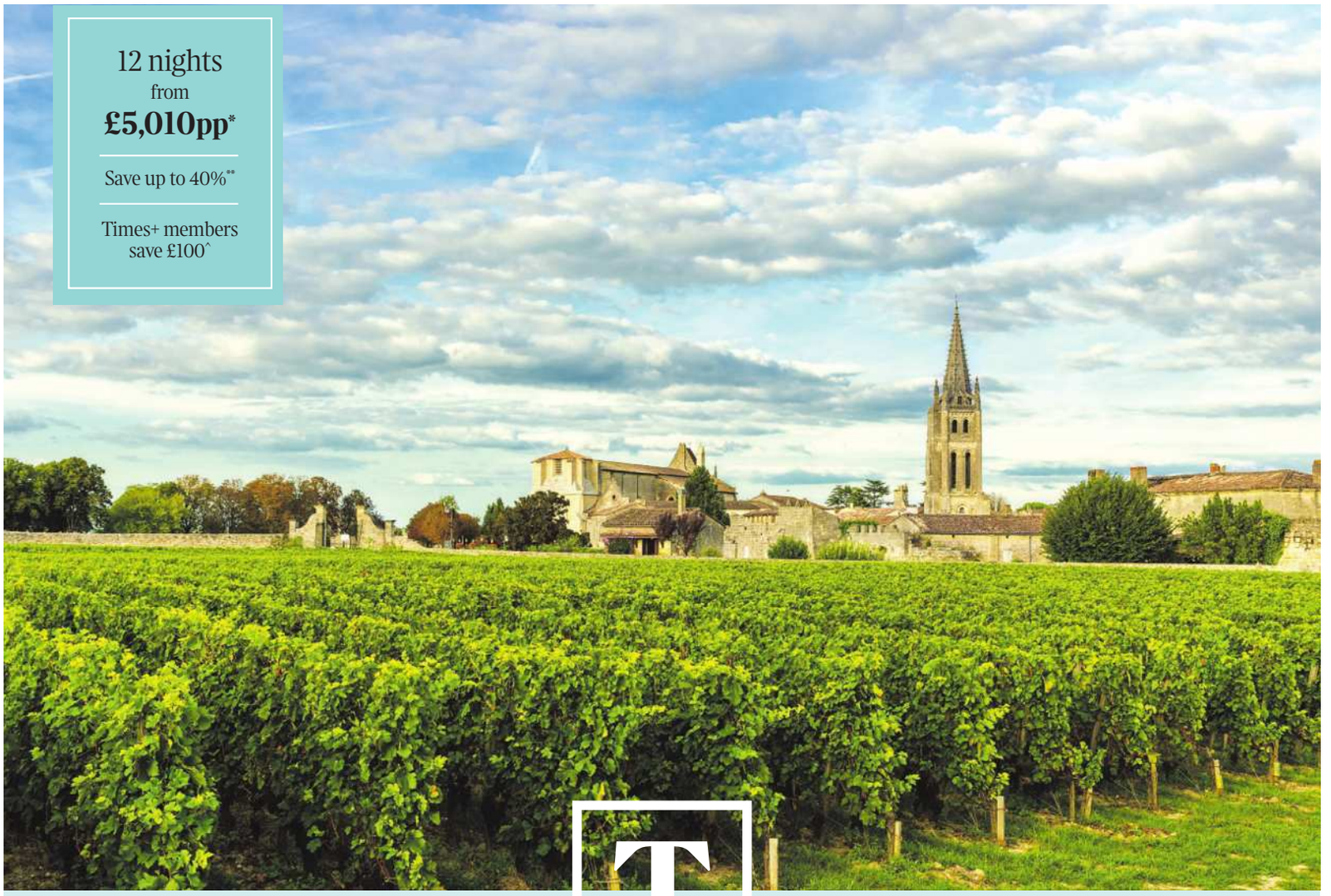
AIRLINE FARES YOU **WON'T** FIND ONLINE. UNIQUE 24 HOUR SUPPORT

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
Adelaide	fr £989	fr £4329
Antigua	fr £619	fr £2929
Auckland	fr £985	fr £4189
Bali	fr £699	fr £2589
Bangkok	fr £549	fr £2359
Barbados	fr £659	fr £2775
Brisbane	fr £929	fr £3329
Cape Town	fr £759	fr £2469
Costa Rica	fr £739	fr £1995
Cyprus	fr £165	fr £589
Dubai	fr £415	fr £1609

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
Faro	fr £119	fr £459
Greece	fr £149	fr £539
Hawaii	fr £1209	fr £3685
Hong Kong	fr £549	fr £2685
Italy	fr £129	fr £469
Jamaica	fr £699	fr £1999
Johannesburg	fr £629	fr £2089
Kuala Lumpur	fr £595	fr £2275
Las Vegas	fr £599	fr £3499
Los Angeles	fr £519	fr £2679
Maldives	fr £609	fr £2275

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
Mauritius	fr £719	fr £2989
Melbourne	fr £875	fr £3395
Mexico	fr £629	fr £2985
Miami	fr £549	fr £2975
Nashville	fr £649	fr £2735
New Orleans	fr £629	fr £2749
New York	fr £529	fr £2759
Orlando	fr £559	fr £2965
Perth	fr £995	fr £4279
Phuket	fr £595	fr £2449
Rio de Janeiro	fr £799	fr £2649

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
San Francisco	fr £495	fr £2549
Seychelles	fr £699	fr £2289
Singapore	fr £539	fr £2519
Sri Lanka	fr £589	fr £2189
St Lucia	fr £645	fr £2915
Sydney	fr £765	fr £3495
Tenerife	fr £99	fr £595
Tokyo	fr £609	fr £2495
Toronto	fr £449	fr £2319
Vancouver	fr £659	fr £3599
Vietnam	fr £569	fr £2499



12 nights
from
£5,010pp*

Save up to 40%**

Times+ members
save £100^

FLY-CRUISE AND TOUR

Autumn Grape Harvest

October 13, 2026

This exclusive package combines an 11-night luxury Silversea through the wine regions of France, Spain and Portugal, before a five-star stay in Lisbon with a private tour.

Set sail to visit Bordeaux during the height of the grape harvest with two overnights in port. The journey continues across the ruggedly elegant Basque country and Galicia, before culminating along Portugal's sun-dappled coast in Oporto and Lisbon. Then relax in Lisbon for two nights and explore Portugal's royal heritage on your private guided excursion. Discover the rococo National Palace of Queluz, Sintra's mystical Quinta da Regaleira, and the colourful, hilltop Pena Palace, before seaside relaxation in picturesque Cascais.

Your itinerary

Southampton, UK – St. Helier, Jersey – Saint-Malo, France – Bordeaux, France (two nights) – Bilbao, Spain – Santander – Vigo – Porto, Portugal – Lisbon (two nights)

What's included

- Flight from Lisbon to London
- 11 nights' all-inclusive cruise aboard Silver Dawn in a Vista Suite
- Onboard wifi, gratuities, fine dining and premium wines and spirits
- Two nights' five-star hotel in Lisbon
- Private full day tour including National Palace of Queluz, Sintra and Cascais
- Port fees and taxes associated with the cruise
- Save 40% when booked by September 8**
- Times+ members save £100^
  Get your unique code at thetimes.com/timesplus

Call 0808 231 8885 or visit thetimes.com/th-harvestcruise

TIMES Holidays

Terms and conditions apply. *Price shown is per person, based on two adults sharing, correct as of July 21, 2026 and subject to change and availability. Price excludes Lisbon tourist tax payable at the hotel, approx. €4 per person per night. **40% Silversea offer applicable to selected voyages only when booked by September 8, 2026, varies by stateroom category booked and already deducted from the advertised price. ^£100 off Times+ offer applicable to each Times Holidays booking made by December 31, 2026 with a minimum spend of £2,000 when quoting your unique Times+ code. Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for full terms and conditions. Offers and bookings are subject to availability, see supplier website for full T&C's. This flight-inclusive holiday is sold and payments accepted by Times Holidays as an agent for Advantage Travel Partnership, ATOL 10571 and financially protected by the ATOL scheme. An ATOL Certificate will be issued on payment. For full booking conditions, visit thetimes.com/holidays/terms-and-conditions. For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to caa.co.uk.

ANDY PARANT

Lac de Tignes and Val Claret

Why this Alpine break was our best ever family holiday

Club Med isn't just for young families, as Daniel Finkelstein and his three grown-up sons discover at the resort in Tignes

I understand the allure of skiing holidays. The crisp mountain air, telling your friends you are off to the Alps without having to be certain exactly where that is, whooshing down a slope (possibly waving to the King as you fly past, soaking the underdressed royal press pack), sitting in the bar afterwards drinking mulled wine, eating fondue with David Niven, all without removing your sunglasses.

But skiing itself seems to me a dreadful idea. You go to a very high place, attach your boots to two planks and then let go. It's slippery. You have to purchase expensive lessons even to learn how to stand still, something that in normal circumstances I'm very good at. You have to wear those stupid puffy coats from the North Face and there's nowhere to put them when you don't have them on. I don't drink. I don't like fondue. And David Niven is dead.

I have a solution, however. I've just been on holiday to a ski resort in summer. There were mountains and mountain air but thankfully it wasn't crisp, which is just a posh word for undesirably cold. I didn't actually have to go skiing or even give an excuse about why I wasn't going skiing. And I could still eat fondue with my wife and three grown-up children, who are better company than David Niven, alive or dead. The King wasn't there, either. He doesn't know what he's missing.

It was heavenly. One of the best family resort holidays we have ever been on. Very possibly the best. And we have been on a lot. We spent quite a bit of time discussing whether this was hyperbolic but concluded it wasn't.

Our destination was the Club Med in Tignes, the large ski resort next to Val d'Isère. In other words in the Alps of southeastern France near the Italian border, but most easily reachable by flying to Geneva and then being picked up by the hotel. The transfer time was about three hours. That does make the journey a long one but the compensation was the spectacular view from the car.

There has been a Club Med there since 1958 but it has been in this new building only since 2022 so it's in very good nick. The village it sits in, Val Claret, is one of five that make up Tignes and is one of the highest points in France. You feel it. Everything is a bit of an effort. That wasn't a problem for me because I didn't propose to do much anyway. For me the altitude was simply an alibi. For those in the family who wanted to hike and exercise — my wife, Nicky, and my two eldest children — and did in fact do both those things, the altitude made it a little harder than they wanted (although with more health benefits, I suppose). As Tignes is separated into different villages you can find activities and accommodation at lower altitude.

Altitude notwithstanding, the weather was perfect. In the hotel there was no need to use the indoor pool because it was sunny enough to sit by the outdoor one, soak in the hot tub, order a cocktail or a Diet Coke and lounge about in wet swim shorts until dry. There was a light breeze too, so it was never oppressive. The weather was like the Med should be but isn't.

Obviously the higher you go, the cooler it is, and when we ascended the Glacier Grande Motte (reaching 3,456m) using first a funicular and then a cable car, we needed fleeces and coats. The views made it a worthwhile effort. Just a vast landscape of peaks, a chocolate box lid scattering of snow in the distance and gleaming lakes to set it all off. And half an hour was the perfect amount of crispness before returning back down to the pool bar.

There were organised trips morning and afternoon from the hotel, with guided hikes for photographers and artists, more strenuous biking and walking, as well as organised games such as petanque and football. I'm not very good at petanque, it turns out, and struggled to take it seriously, especially when the other team took out a special measuring instrument to confirm that they had won (well done mates, by the way).

One of the best things we did was stroll round the Lac de Tignes, stopping in a café. All the Club Med activities, including the walks and biking, are included. Additionally waterslides, paddleboarding and other similar activities are available if you buy a My Tignes card (cheaper with a Club Med discount, £28pp for seven days). But walking was lovely.

The whole thing was striking and I found the scenery a fabulous backdrop. But it's probably worth saying that connoisseurs of the Alps see Tignes as a well developed resort rather than one of its more charming nooks. I'll take their word for it, although it certainly charmed me.

In the same way the Club Med hotel isn't intimate, as it has 430 rooms and can take 1,000 guests. The result is better facilities and better infrastructure. So it's a choice, really, but I'd make the same one again in a heartbeat.

We first explored places like Club Med when our children were small. We had friends who would take three kids under the age of six on things like a caravan trip round Norway or visits to the Rijksmuseum. These struck us as suboptimal forms of entertainment. We were always drawn to resort hotels that provided childcare — otherwise the trip seemed less a holiday than simply transferring all the chaos of the family home to an even less convenient location. Not much fun for anyone.

So, naturally, there were plenty of children in Tignes. The French school holidays had started (we arrived on July 4), even though ours hadn't. I can't report on the quality of the kids' clubs, but in the past they were good. The only thing to think about in comparison with, say, Mark Warner, is that the residents of the club and their kids are overwhelmingly French. English is spoken but it's an afterthought.

It's hard to be sure of the proportions but when the big screen showed France playing Morocco in the World Cup, there was a packed theatre with perhaps 200 people watching. When England played Mexico there were three of us — me and two of my sons. Although the fact that it was three o'clock in the morning may also have had something to do with it.

We did slightly wonder whether our family would have outgrown the Club Med experience, given that our three boys (our three men, truth be told) are now 26, 24 and 19. Would we feel overrun by toddlers?

We did not. A Club Med holiday is not for those seeking an intimate experience or craving solitude and silence. Sometimes music was blaring when you wished it was not. On the other hand, the shows and dancing in the evening were great fun. And we never felt crowded out. The resort wasn't full and the kids spend their days in kids' club. The whole place was carpeted, so even the dining room was restful.

In any case, the resort provided the ultimate of adult experiences. As well as a much used sauna, gym and spa, it had a fully inclusive bar and a fabulous restaurant. I don't drink alcohol but I still really like a fully inclusive package. Partly that's because the others do drink and really enjoyed the wine, the beers and the cocktails. It's good value when you have men in their twenties in the party. But what I like even more than that is the idea of staying in a hotel without that sinking feeling that your bill is getting larger and larger.

The real jewel in the crown of the resort was its food. There were some completely unnecessary but still delightful snacks available at 7pm with a drink (guacamole, French cheeses such as velours de bleu, coppa ham should you want it) and then dinner in the buffet restaurant. The variety and quality of the food was outstanding.

A daily roast, all sorts of pasta, pad thai, paella, lamb bao, fresh fish of all kinds, casseroles, savoury crêpes, sweet crêpes, mountains of cakes and tarts, and all with the care and freshness you would expect from a first-class restaurant delivering the food to your table. Indeed, when we did book the (included) night in the Solstice restaurant to take advantage of the table service, it was a bit of an anticlimax. We had got used to a more expansive choice.

The dinners were the best offering but lunch and breakfast were top-class too. And together with well-appointed and modern rooms (we had a suite with a lounge as part of the exclusive collection, with a further twin room for the older boys/men) it made the Club Med seem like a first-class luxury hotel without feeling as though one was being sold an omelette for £28.50.

An Alpine holiday designed to be posh enough and comfortable enough for the well-heeled but without actually having to ski. Perfect.

Need to know

Daniel Finkelstein was a guest of Club Med, which has seven nights' all-inclusive from £1,491pp (clubmed.co.uk). Fly to Geneva

Sydney & Beyond

After a stay in iconic Sydney, immerse yourself in the wealth of activities and scenic beauty that New South Wales has to offer. Spot playful dolphins in Port Stephens, sample fine wines in the Hunter Valley and explore the spectacular Blue Mountains National Park.

14 NIGHTS FROM £4,999[◊]

Business Class flights,
14 nights 3★+ to 4★+ hotels,
11 days car hire and Hunter Valley Food & Wine Explorer

Fly Business Class For Less!

5★ Bangkok & Phuket, Thailand

See the best of Thailand's capital and beach in complete luxury. Sail on a scenic boat along the Chao Phraya River, enjoy panoramic views from one of Bangkok's many iconic rooftop bars and sample the incredible street food. Finish your stay and relax on the beautiful palm-fringed beaches of Phuket.

10 NIGHTS FROM £3,449[~]

Business Class flights, 3 nights 5★ Bangkok hotel, 7 nights 5★ Phuket beach resort, breakfast and private transfers

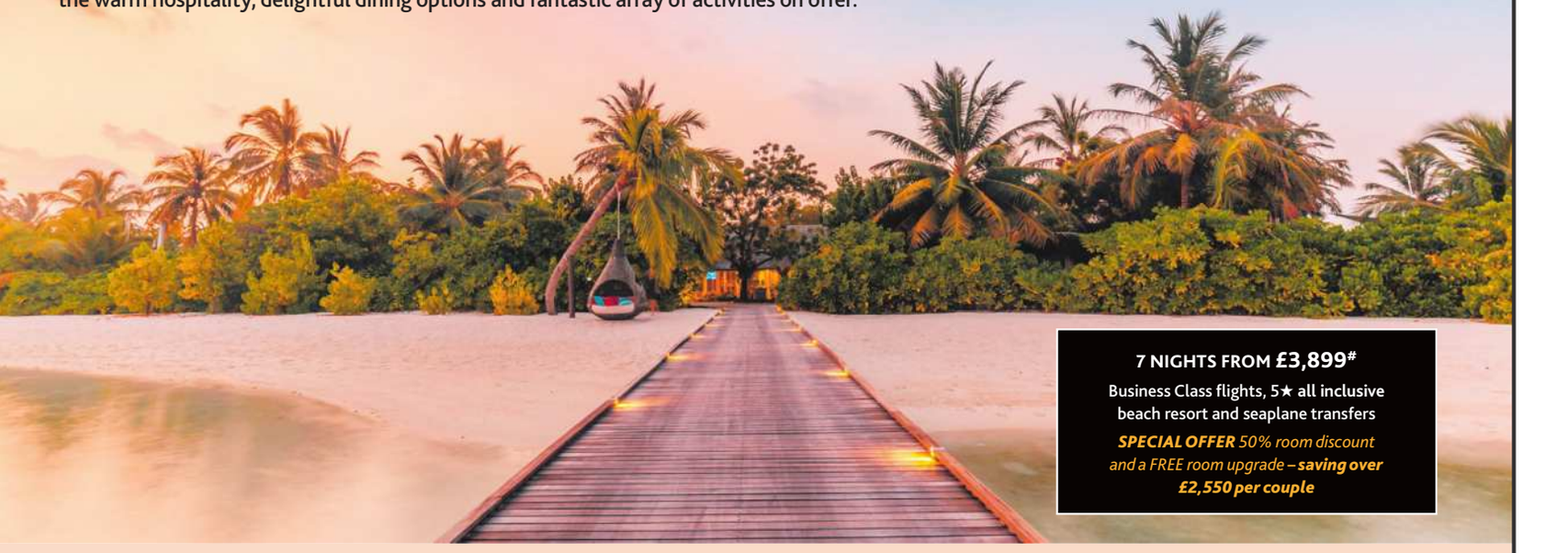
***SPECIAL OFFER** 25% room discount*
– saving over £500 per couple

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

TF TRUST · TRAILFINDERS FINANCIAL GUARANTEE · IATA · CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED · Which? Awards 2026 · ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk · ★ Trustpilot ★★★★★ **No.1 TOUR OPERATOR**

Magical Maldives Escape

Striking the perfect balance of understated luxury and a stylish hideaway, this stunning resort is surrounded by lush tropical jungle and an excellent house reef. Snorkel in the sparkling, azure waters amongst the vibrant marine life and delight in the warm hospitality, delightful dining options and fantastic array of activities on offer.



7 NIGHTS FROM £3,899#

Business Class flights, 5★ all inclusive beach resort and seaplane transfers

SPECIAL OFFER *50% room discount and a FREE room upgrade* ***– saving over £2,550 per couple***

Treat yourself to a little luxury for less and fly across the globe with these exceptional holidays inclusive of business class flights handpicked by Trailfinders.

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

Dubai City Break

From the enticing shopping malls, exceptional dining options and iconic cityscape to the beautiful beaches and warm azure waters – Dubai makes the perfect city break, with plenty to explore!

5 NIGHTS FROM £2,099#

Business Class flights, 4★ Dubai hotel, breakfast and private transfers

NO ONE LOOKS AFTER YOU BETTER

Call ***TRAILFINDERS*** on **020 7938 0207** or visit your local Travel Centre

Prices are per person based on a twin/double share & valid for selected ~Jun, #Sep & ◊Feb 27 departures. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print on 30 Jul 26.

The real-life Dirty Dancing camp

Have the time of your life at the resort where the classic was filmed. By Zoey Goto

Mountain Lake Lodge

The summer of 1987 cast a long shadow. *Dirty Dancing* shimmied onto our screens, bringing with it Johnny, Baby and a halcyon holiday resort that lingered in the imagination long after the credits rolled. I've watched the dance-fuelled drama more times than I've blown out birthday candles but on the opening night of my *Dirty Dancing* retreat, as I step into the ballroom it dawns on me: I've entered the premier league of groupies.

The dancefloor pulsates with leotards, inflatable watermelons and mambo moves. And then, through the glitter and commotion, she appears, parting the crowd like a mullet-haired Moses. Dressed as Patrick Swayze's character, in black leather and Ray-Ban sunglasses, she gyrates her way to glory in the fiercely contested costume competition. The room erupts. In that moment, 3,856 miles from my home in London, I know I've found my people.

I had made the trip to southwest Virginia, about an hour's drive from Roanoke-Blacksburg regional airport, to visit Mountain Lake Lodge. It was where *Dirty Dancing* was filmed 40 years ago, being used for the fictional Kellerman's Mountain House in the Catskills, New York. The coming-of-age romance set in 1963 starred Jennifer Grey as the wide-eyed Frances "Baby" Houseman and Patrick Swayze as Johnny Castle, the resort's smouldering dance instructor. Shot on a shoestring budget in 43 days — much of it on location at Mountain Lake Lodge — the plucky production defied the odds to become a pop culture phenomenon, winning an Academy Award for its soundtrack and grossing $189 million at the box office.

Decades later, the cinematic juggernaut still holds sway and, year after year, devotees flock to the retreat where the love story first unfolded. Lately, the tempo has picked up. With whispers of a long-awaited *Dirty Dancing* sequel swirling like a well-executed spin, a new troupe are quick-stepping to Mountain Lake Lodge's famous dancefloor.

The *Dirty Dancing* weekenders can book up a year in advance and run monthly from spring to autumn, taking their final bow in early November. From Friday afternoon to Sunday morning, it's a staged whirlwind of costume contests, film screenings, group dance classes, trivia and a summer camp-style treasure hunt, with the chance to foxtrot late into the night.

Glancing around the dancehall reveals that, of the 300 guests in attendance, most are women: mothers, daughters and female friends ready to merengue, plus a handful of good-humoured husbands along for the ride. One such partner is Bob Stear, who bought the weekend as a surprise birthday gift for his wife, Sarah, who was turning 50.

The British couple flew in from the Midlands, warming up with a few days in Nashville, Tennessee, before travelling onwards to Virginia for the headline act. Despite rocking a giant watermelon slice costume with gusto, Bob insists he's no *Dirty Dancing* diehard. In fact he's never watched the film all the way through.

For this married pair, the draw isn't just the Hollywood blockbuster, it's the chance to hit the dancefloor together. "We love a bit of fancy dress and getting into the spirit of things," Sarah says. "But we're too old for clubbing now. Unless someone's getting married, there's just not many chances to go out and dance together any more," she adds, giving a playful twirl of her pink dress à la Baby in the corner.

Very little has changed at the hotel since it dazzled on the silver screen. I realise this over breakfast, seated at the Houseman family's table with the same weathered wood and spindle-back chairs where Baby once sipped her orange juice. A staff member even allows me to take a photo with the gleaming silver water jug — the very one Baby used to douse the insufferable waiter Robbie Gould.

Map in hand, I set off across the sprawling grounds to tick off the film's most iconic locations: the spot where Baby first sighted Johnny, the hand-painted "Staff Quarters" sign where she famously carried a watermelon to bluff her way into a party, and the surrounding trees the production crew spray-painted green to fake a midsummer verdant landscape.

I poke my head into Baby's lodge, billed "the best cabin at Kellerman's", complete with a creaking wraparound porch and the twin bedroom where Baby and her sister Lisa slumbered. A peek inside Swayze's guest room during production — room 232, a smart but modest space overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains — offers a quiet reminder of a time before he became a household name. The shower curtain disappears often, I'm told, taken by fans convinced it once brushed against Swayze himself. Spoiler: it didn't. But who can blame them for dreaming?

Sadly, there's no opportunity to practice the lift — the film's triumphant finale — since the lake, thanks to a curious geological quirk that causes it to drain in cycles, is all but bone-dry during my visit. Instead I book in for a private dance class in the famous gazebo. Over a focused 30-minute session, the instructor Dennis Williams coaxes my "spaghetti arms" into shape in the spot where Baby and her father shared a tearjerking moment.

Back at the lodge, it's clear the film isn't the only thing that has aged surprisingly well. The stone main house, dating back to 1936, and the cabins that dot the grounds have been spruced up in recent years. My spacious suite, a hot ticket with newlyweds ready for rumba and romance, features white wooden shutters, a crackling fireplace and a joyfully nostalgic hot tub. If you can tear yourself away from the festivities there are miles of hiking trails winding through protected forest and leading to sweeping overlooks that stretch across a blanket of rolling hills all the way to neighbouring West Virginia.

But let's be honest, I'm here for Swayze, not scenic summits. So I find myself joining the *Dirty Dancing* superfans Sharyn Jackson and Amani Mohsen in the hotel's restaurant, where the dulcet tones of the house band play *Be My Baby* from the soundtrack. Over a buffet meal of sliced beef tenderloin I chat to the childhood friends from New Jersey, who first bonded over *Dirty Dancing* in their early teens. Three decades later they've flown in to reunite for what they affectionately call their "Swayzcation".

Jackson admits she had her doubts before arriving at the retro-chic resort. Her only previous foray into film-themed travel — a *Sound of Music* coach tour through Austria — hadn't quite hit the high notes. "They played the soundtrack on a loop the entire time. I couldn't face watching the film for about three years afterwards," she says, laughing. "So I was a little nervous that this weekend would be the same. But it's not. If anything, I love *Dirty Dancing* even more than when I arrived." Far from over-the-top, the *Dirty Dancing* theme is delivered with a light touch throughout the weekend, more soft-shoe than full-on jazz hands.

If anything, it could perhaps be dialled up a notch: picture a dicky-bowed, megaphone-wielding entertainment director greeting arrivals, bunny hop relays on the grassy front lawn and a finale-night talent show plucked straight from the movie as potential playful add-ons.

As it stands, the weekend has been a hit with the guests in their throwback Kellerman's T-shirts, purchased from the on-site shop. There's something about the collective experience: the shared swoon when Swayze cha-chas into view or the ripple of laughter at an inside joke all enhance the daily film screenings.

Mohsen agrees. "When you're in a room full of people who get the things that make you laugh, you're in for a good time," she says, adding that nowhere else would her reference to the pachanga be met with such amusement.

On the final morning, clusters of women, united by a weekend of *Dirty Dancing* devotion, eagerly line up on the lawn for a memento photo beside the Kellerman's Mountain House sign. A couple of motorbikes (just the sort the leather-clad rebel Johnny would once have revved past on) glide by in the background.

It all feels like a rewind to simpler days. I'm reminded of the closing scene in *Dirty Dancing*, when the misty-eyed resort owner, Max Kellerman, mourns the end of an era. He frets that today's kids would rather waltz around Europe than his polished parquet floor. "It feels like it's all slipping away," the old-school hotelier sighs.

As it turns out, Kellerman's fears were unfounded. Because at this resort tucked into a mountainside in rural Virginia, it's the hopeful summer of 1963 all over again. And watermelon-carrying guests are once more having the time of their lives.

Need to know

Zoey Goto was a guest of Virginia Tourism (virginia.org). Mountain Lake Lodge's Dirty Dancing Weekend package has two nights all-inclusive from £915pp, including activities (mtnlakelodge.com). Fly to Charlotte or Roanoke-Blacksburg

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية

Travel the World with Qatar Airways

Skytrax awarded No.1 airline in the world, Qatar Airways excels in comfort, style and class. They are the experts in travel, flying to over 160 destinations worldwide and their consistency in performance makes travelling with them easy and comfortable.

Discover where they fly to and build your dream adventure today…

Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Maldives

7 nights from **£2,499^**

Flights with Qatar Airways, 5★ beach resort incl half board and seaplane transfers

• This secluded resort is set in the unspoilt Noonu Atoll, boasting powder white sand beaches • Enjoy a wealth of sumptuous dining options and a house reef • Great option for couples and families alike with an adults only infinity pool and a family pool

SPECIAL OFFER
– saving over £2,200 per couple

Qatar & Phuket, Thailand

10 nights from **£1,199~**

Flights with Qatar Airways, 3 nights 5★ Doha hotel, 7 nights Phuket beach resort, breakfast and private transfers

• Explore the vibrant souks, captivating museums and desert landscapes of Doha, Qatar's capital city • Relax on the stunning beaches of Phuket and discover the famous Thai culture and landscapes

***SPECIAL OFFER** 3 FREE nights in Phuket*
– saving over £150 per couple

Classic Sri Lanka & Beach

15 nights from **£2,349***

Flights with Qatar Airways, 9 day private tour incl 8 nights 3★ to 4★ hotels, private driver/guide, selected sightseeing & breakfast and 7 nights 4★ beach resort incl half board & private airport transfer

• Visit the gems of the Cultural Triangle • Explore the hill country town of Kandy and lush tea plantations • Enjoy plenty of time to unwind with a relaxing beach break finish

TF EXCLUSIVE – saving over £550 per couple

Sydney, Rock & Reef

14 nights from **£3,649^**

Flights with Qatar Airways, 5 nights 4★+Sydney hotel, Introduction to Sydney Tour, Hop-On Hop-Off Sydney Harbour Explorer, 3 nights Uluru hotel, Uluru Base & Sunset Tour, 6 nights 4★ Port Douglas hotel, Outer Barrier Reef Cruise, Cape Tribulation & Daintree Rainforest Tour and selected transfers

• Cruise the famous Sydney Harbour • Learn about Aboriginal Culture • Snorkel in the amazing waters of the Great Barrier Reef

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

TF TRUST · ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk · IATA · CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED · Which? Awards 2026

Call ***TRAILFINDERS*** on **020 7938 0207** or visit your local Travel Centre

Prices are per person based on a twin/double share & valid for selected *Oct, ^May & ~Jun departures.
Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print on 30 Jul 26.

Trustpilot ★★★★★
No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

BOOK WITH THE TOP PARTNER FOR AMBASSADOR CRUISE LINE

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 7TH AUGUST 2026

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE BRAND NEW NO-FLY SCANDINAVIAN & BALTIC DISCOVERIES

FREE ON BOARD SPEND SALE

ADULTS-ONLY, TRADITIONAL BRITISH CRUISING

FREE ON BOARD SPEND OF UP TO £400*

AMBASSADOR MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE++

HOW TO USE YOUR FREE ON BOARD SPEND

Book a shore excursion
Booking a shore excursion with your on board credit will allow you to make the most of your cruise by delving deeper into each port, but not too deep into your pockets.

Upgrade your drinks package
If you know you'll want to order drinks each day on board, whether that's a poolside cocktail or a Pinotage with dinner, drinks packages are the way to go.

Dine at a speciality restaurant
On board ***Ambience***, you can journey into Indian gastronomy in Saffron speciality dining or Chef's Table.

Treatments & salon
On board salons and spa offer you a tranquil area to relax and unwind away from the hustle and bustle of some of the busier areas.

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 7TH AUGUST 2027

AUGUST 2027

Sat 7 **Embark *Ambience* and depart depart London Tilbury**

Mon 9 **Copenhagen, Denmark**
Copenhagen epitomises Scandinavian elegance with its historic charm and modern vibrancy. From royal palaces to innovative architecture, the city invites exploration of its cultural richness and harbour views

Wed 11 **Gdańsk (from Gdynia), Poland**

Fri 13 **Stockholm, Sweden**
Stockholm is a city of timeless beauty. Stroll through the historic Gamla Stan district, marvel at the Royal Palace, and cruise the picturesque archipelago. Indulge in Swedish cuisine, explore world-class museums, and immerse yourself in Nordic culture amidst stunning waterfront vistas

Sat 14 **Helsinki, Finland**

Sun 15 **Tallinn, Estonia**
Enchanting Tallinn is renowned for its medieval Old Town. Explore picturesque cobblestone streets and stunning Baltic Sea views. Discover historic landmarks like Toompea Castle, enjoy authentic Estonian cuisine in quaint cafes, and enjoy the city's rich cultural heritage

Tue 17 **Berlin (from Warnemünde), Germany**

Wed 18 **Fredericia, Denmark ★Maiden Port★**
Fredericia is a fascinating small city surrounded by nature. You can enjoy a whale safari tour on the Little Belt strait, explore Naturpark Lillebælt, Denmark's largest nature park, or simply discover the city's history

Sat 21 **Arrive in London Tilbury**

Dates not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea

YOUR INCREDIBLE ROL CRUISE FARES

Inside SOLD OUT
Ocean View from **£1,959pp**
Balcony from **£3,319pp**
Suite SOLD OUT
Solo fares are **SOLD OUT**

JUST A DEPOSIT REQUIRED TO BOOK THEN NOTHING TO PAY UNTIL 2027

SERVICE, QUALITY & TRUST WITH ROL CRUISE

- ☑ **5★ SERVICE, WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US**
- ☑ **THE UK'S NO.1 INDEPENDENT CRUISE SPECIALIST**
- ☑ **ABTA & ATOL PROTECTED**
- ☑ **UNBEATABLE VALUE**

WHAT'S INCLUDED

FREE ON BOARD SPEND OF UP TO £400 FOR ALL BOOKINGS*

- **AMBASSADOR GUARANTEE++ – ENJOY YOURSELF ON YOUR FIRST AMBASSADOR CRUISE OR YOUR MONEY BACK**
- 14 nights full-board cruising on board ***Ambience***, including++:
  - ✓ An authentic and traditional cruise experience at a fantastically affordable price
  - ✓ All meals on board including breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner
  - ✓ A wide range of entertainment, including evening shows, plays, cabarets, live music & classical interludes
  - ✓ The currency on board is pound sterling
- **PLUS,** book by 8pm 7th August 2026 to receive an **EXCLUSIVE FREE** £25 M&S Gift Card+

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES®
worth **£££s** off your next cruise††

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE ABTA ABTA No Y6765

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON **0808 239 9425**
QUOTE OFFER REF **644621**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM -8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award 2026 feefo

Fares and availability correct at time of sign off (29/07/2026), are based on two adults sharing, except single cabins, and may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. Gratuities of up to £7.00 per person per night are automatically added to guests on board account. +Gift is based on one per booking for UK mainland addresses only. ++Subject to cruise line T&C's. Ambassador guarantee T&C's apply. *On board spend is per cabin. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Ambassador T&Cs apply. E&OE.

BLUE JAY PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

The Palazzo Ducale and Basilica di Sant'Andrea, Mantua

The magic of lakeside Mantua

The city has an artistic heritage to rival Florence and a setting to match Venice, says Helen Pickles

One of the many charms of Mantua is that it is almost cartoonishly Italian. Cars rumble along narrow cobbled streets; cyclists weave in and out, nonchalantly chattering on phones; grand courtyards are glimpsed through nondescript doorways; domes, towers and castellated battlements snap in and out of view.

Where Florence had the Medicis, Mantua had the Gonzagas — equally arrogant, powerful and lavish artistic patrons who from 1328 dominated the city for nearly 400 years. They brought in rising artistic stars such as Giulio Romano (Raphael's assistant), the fresco genius Andrea Mantegna and the polymath and architect Leon Battista Alberti, and hired Claudio Monteverdi as a court composer. The surprise is that this Renaissance beauty 26 miles south of Verona in Lombardy, northern Italy, is so little known.

OK, Mantua is small and doesn't have an airport (fly to Verona and take the 45-minute train) but frankly that's nitpicking. That's because on top of its Renaissance appeal, it has a backdrop only Venice can match: three glassy-green lakes, created as protection in the 12th century from the River Mincio, a tributary of the Po, curl around its edges like a seductive sigh.

Approached via the San Giorgio bridge, the city seems to hover above the water. The high walls and towers that dominate this view belong to the 500-room Palazzo Ducale, the Gonzagas' greatest conceit. Most of the rooms are empty of artworks and furniture, which was sold off when times got hard or stripped by the invading Habsburgs in the 17th century, which is perhaps fortunate or you'd be there all week (£15; mantovaducale.beniculturali.it). Nevertheless, walls and ceilings are painted to within an inch of their lives. In the Hall of Archers there's a frieze of the family's favourite horses, in another room a ceiling labyrinth that gave me an awful crick in the neck. Looking out of the windows of the massive Hall of the Rivers, with its ghastly stucco fountains, I was eye-level with lemon trees despite being on the first floor: another conceit, a hanging garden. The vast family portrait in the Camera degli Sposi (wedding chamber) is fascinating in its unflattering details. Look up and there's a trompe l'oeil of figures around a circular balustrade, an urn of flowers dangerously close to toppling over.

As was I. Gelato was needed and Gelateria Loggetta, established in 1939 and a five-minute walk southwest in Piazza Broletto, had queues to confirm its reputation. Everything here is made *a casa* and alongside the expected pistachio and stracciatella are some magnificent flourishes, including ricotta and fig, and a sweet-sour bergamot and sage (fb.com/gelaterialoggetta).

Piazza Broletto is one of four central squares that meander into one another, each edged with arcades and brick or painted plaster buildings in dusty, sun-bleached shades. The grandest square, Piazza Sordello, is overlooked by Palazzo Ducale and the frothy-white baroque façade of the duomo, with its classical interiors by Romano.

More satisfying is the Basilica di Sant'Andrea, which somehow squashes into tiny Piazza Mantegna (free; diocesi dimantova.it). To see its dome I had to stand in the adjacent Piazza Erbe. Designed by Alberti, it's huge, the size cleverly emphasised by its single nave. The basilica's greatest treasure, a holy relic containing Christ's blood (it's a long story), is in the crypt and guarded by silent volunteers.

I felt more comfortable in the simple surrounds of the 11th-century Rotunda di San Lorenzo, the city's oldest church, which sits meekly in the corner of Piazza Erbe (free; diocesidimantova.it). Small, squat and round, entirely built of brick in a romanesque design, it's like a little pink tea cosy. It was upsetting to learn that it had been closed down, the dome destroyed and then hidden by warehouses for over 300 years until being rescued early last century. Not so much hidden but often missed is the Bibiena Theatre, around the corner from Rotunda di San Lorenzo in narrow Via dell'Accademia (£2.50 at the door).

The building's classical exterior gives no hint of the baroque interior; it's like walking into a jewellery box. Four tiers of pillared boxes, each with carved balustrades, frescoed walls and pretty glass lampshades, rise above a bell-shaped auditorium of dusky-pink velvet seats. The 14-year-old Mozart dazzled audiences here in 1770, a month after its opening.

Like many of the city's attractions, the theatre closes over lunchtime. By late morning even the tiniest side street will have an *osteria* with cloth-covered tables wobbling among on cobbles. Surprisingly not even the more touristy restaurants in the central piazzas are greedy with their prices. In Piazza Erbe, the long-established Cento Rampini, with its hearty comfort food and whip-smart waiters, is a safe bet for people-watching (mains from £18; ristorantecentorampini.com).

I'd dined well the previous evening at Osteria dell'Oca, a simple traditional spot where the waiters are brisk, verging on brusque. It serves classic Mantovan food including beef stew with smoked polenta, and stewed rabbit with herbs (mains from £19; osteriadelloca.it). "And they have donkey on the menu!" an American woman at the next table exclaimed in a horrified stage whisper. Indeed *asino* is a local speciality.

For a modern take on Mantovan food I tried Lo Scalco Grasso, where codfish tiramisu came in a glass bowl (layers of codfish, potatoes, codfish foam and cacao nibs) and the pumpkin tortelli were big and pillowy (mains from £22; loscalco grasso.it). And if you want discreet and classy, try Il Cigno, hidden in a corner of Piazza Carlo d'Arco, with its romantic courtyard dining and wine list the size of an encyclopaedia (mains from £24; ilcignoristorante.it).

The former two restaurants were near my hotel, the quiet, minimalist Casa Poli, a ten-minute walk south from the centre (hotelcasapoli.it). The breakfast pastries here are sinfully good and it was made clear that it would be rude if I didn't try tortia elvezia, a Mantovan cake that's effectively zabaglione in a sandwich. For contrast, I'd booked a couple of nights at Palazzo Castiglioni, a brooding 14th-century, castellated affair opposite Palazzo Ducale owned by descendants of its 16th-century occupants (palazzo castiglionimantova.com).

Built for the Bonacolsi family, who preceded the Gonzagas, it has plenty of history. The antique-filled rooms are massive. My tower room had its own roof terrace (the climb, up a spindly spiral staircase, not for the faint-hearted) with views over a jigsaw of pantiled roofs as far as the hazy pre-Alps.

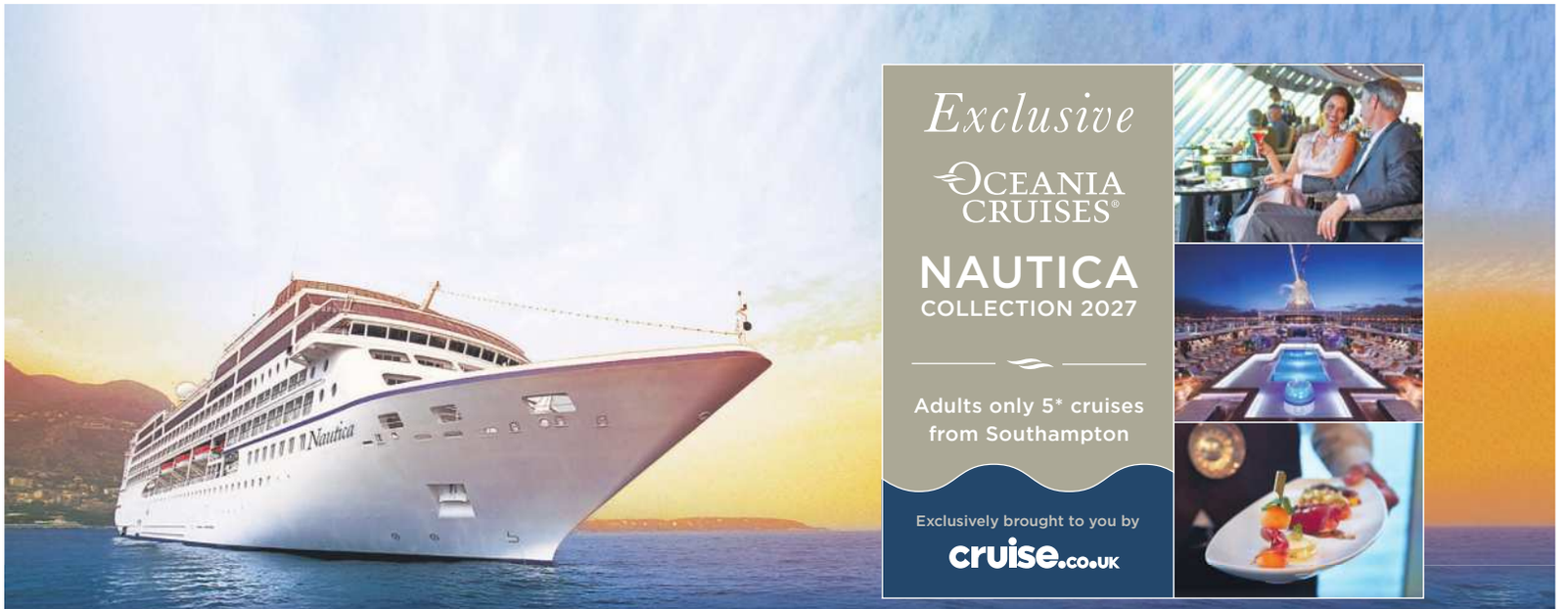
There was nothing hazy about the frescoes in the Gonzagas' other great treasure house — actually, more a pleasure house — Palazzo Te (£13; centropalazzote.it). Built for Federico II's trysts with his mistress, Romano's lavishly decorated rooms are rich and fleshy, with prime stud horses framed in trompe l'oeil windows against romantic landscapes; mythical figures and animals in an orgiastic feast; and an all-enveloping room, Camera dei Giganti, where Jupiter and his pals seek revenge on the Giants by crushing them with boulders, lightning bolts and earthquakes, the horror scenes reaching down to the floor.

After this sensory overload, a cooling lakeside walk was imperative. I picked up a slab of *sbrisolona* — the ubiquitous Mantovan thick, crumbly almond biscuit sold in every *pasticceria*, bar and café — and wandered the path that fringes the middle lake, Lago di Mezzo. It was Saturday afternoon. Families were picnicking in the shade of trees, a yoga group was variously wobbling and giggling, cyclists chattered noisily and silent fishermen sat as still as statues. Cruise boats elegantly criss-crossed the waters, parts of which are nature reserves, rich with birdlife and, in season, a flush of lotus blossoms.

How extraordinary, I thought, to have this watery playground minutes from the ancient heart of the city. Even more extraordinary when I woke the following morning was the clanging of the duomo's bells mixed with the fierce little exhausts of tiny car engines. Piazza Sordello was filled with colourful Fiat 500s; by sheer chance my stay had coincided with the annual Mantova Meeting 500. As they set off, with great ceremony, and with horns beeping and trilling, it was once again almost cartoonishly Italian.

Need to know

Helen Pickles was a guest of Kirker Holidays, which has three nights' B&B at Casa Poli from £788pp, including flights and transfers (kirkerholidays.com); Palazzo Castiglioni, which has B&B doubles from £242 (palazzocastiglionimantova.com); and Mantova Tourism (turismo.mantova.it)



Exclusive

OCEANIA CRUISES®

NAUTICA
COLLECTION 2027

Adults only 5* cruises from Southampton

Exclusively brought to you by

cruise.co.uk

Your *Exclusive* sanctuary at sea onboard Oceania Nautica includes:

■ Free house drinks package with complimentary champagne, wine & beer during lunch and dinner and at designated times across all bars and lounges ■ Onboard Wi-Fi included ■ All Gratuities ■ Adult-only guests ■ Includes soft drinks, speciality coffees & teas, Vero water, juices, smoothies & gourmet ice cream ■ Experience the Finest Cuisine At Sea across multiple onboard dining venues

Buy One, Get One FREE!

Twice the luxury, half the price.

Iberian Return From Southampton To Lisbon

23 August 2027

3 nights from

Passenger 1
1099pp

Passenger 2
FREE

23rd August 2027 (3 nights)	*Includes return flight to London Heathrow*	*Includes return flight to Manchester*
Inside **(passenger 1)**	1099	1199
Inside **(passenger 2)**	FREE	FREE
Veranda **(passenger 1)**	1599	1699
Veranda **(passenger 2)**	FREE	FREE

Cruising solo? View our solo prices!

23rd August 2027 (3 nights)	*Solo Inside*	*Solo Outside*	*Solo Veranda*
Includes return flight to London Heathrow	799	1099	1299
Includes return flight to Manchester	899	1099	1399

SCAN ME TO VIEW ALL PRICES AND FULL ITINERARY

Includes:

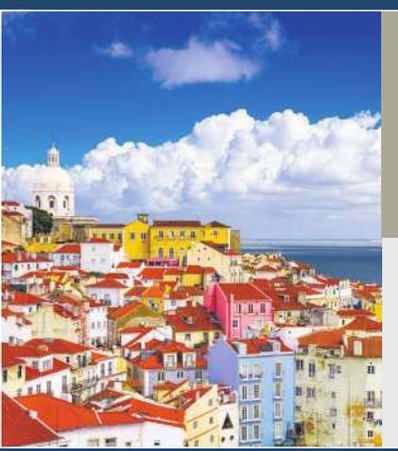
- 3-night Oceania Nautica cruise
- All of the above inclusions
- Coach transfer
- Free return flight to London or Manchester
- Half-day sightseeing tour of Lisbon

Itinerary:

Day 1 **Embark Oceania Nautica In Southampton, UK**
Your luxury voyage begins now. You'll travel to either London Heathrow or Manchester and step aboard your dedicated coach to Southampton. After arriving in Southampton, you will embark the luxurious Oceania Nautica for your 3-night cruise.

Day 2 & 3 **At Sea**
Enjoy sensational days and nights onboard Oceania Nautica, including the Finest Cuisine At Sea, decadent onboard facilities, and sensational included house drinks.

Day 4 **Disembark Oceania Nautica In Lisbon, Portugal & Fly To UK**
Say hello to the world-famous city of Lisbon! After disembarking your luxury cruise, you will enjoy a half-day sightseeing tour of Lisbon. Traverse winding, charming city streets and visit iconic landmarks in this incredible destination before travelling to the airport for your return flight back to the UK.



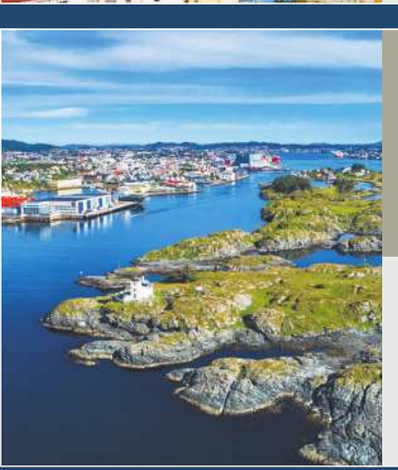
No Fly Grand Iberian & Morocco Tapestry

27 July 2027

12 nights from
2999pp

Itinerary: Southampton > La Coruña > Porto > Lisbon > Portimao > Seville > Tangier > Le Verdon-Sur-Mer > Southampton

SCAN ME TO VIEW ALL PRICES AND FULL ITINERARY



No Fly Norwegian Fjords & Nordic Light

20 July 2027

7 nights from
1799pp

Itinerary: Southampton > Leirvik > Måløy > Bergen > Haugesund > Southampton

SCAN ME TO VIEW ALL PRICES AND FULL ITINERARY

Secure
Fully protected
ABTA & ATOL bonded

40 Years Established
We are the Real Cruise People - Cruise experts for over 40 years

Personal
Deal with a dedicated cruise.co.uk expert cruise consultant

cruise.co.uk
THE REAL CRUISE PEOPLE

TALK TO ONE OF OUR FRIENDLY CRUISE CONSULTANTS TODAY

0800 408 6206

TO GET THIS OFFER QUOTE CODE **TIMES-OCEANIA**

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 9pm | Sunday: 10am - 8pm

SCAN TO SEE THE FULL COLLECTION

Cruise.co.uk is fully bonded by the Civil Aviation Authority under Air Travel Organisers License (ATOL) number 3385 to protect your holiday payments and repatriation. All fares are per person based on two adults sharing. Prices are correct at the time of publication, we do our best to supply accurate pricing. All fares are subject to availability & capacity controlled. All cruise offers are cruise only unless otherwise stated, all fly cruises are based on London flights, regional flights may be available but are subject to availability and may incur a supplement. All flights are subject to availability. Hotel accommodation is on a room only basis unless otherwise stated. Every effort has been made to make sure prices are correct at the time of publication but are subject to availability, please call to confirm pricing and availability. Oceania 2 For 1 packages are not combinable with any other promotion, please note the 2 for 1 is based on Oceania brochure fare including Oceania flights. Please speak to your consultant for more details. This offer is not combinable with free door to door transfers on any other Cruise.co.uk promotions. Cruise.co.uk reserves the right to amend or change the terms of this promotion without prior notice or announcement. Please see Cruise.co.uk for full terms and conditions. Calls are recorded for Marketing & Training Purposes. E&OE.

ABTA The Travel Association 78024 · ATOL Protected · IATA

RODOLPHE VILLEVIEILLE; GETTY IMAGES

Late deals

Antarctica, the Alps or a Croatia cruise

The Franciscan monastery on Hvar, Croatia. Below: kayaking on the Weddell Sea, Antarctica

UK

Stay in a Cumbrian cottage

The Eden Valley is the unsung hero of Cumbria's rural scene. A long, wide stretch of country between the Pennines and the Lake District, it's home to most of its locals and many of its farms, and it's a quiet and bucolic launchpad for fell walking in the national park, otter-spotting along the River Eden and big teas at Larch Cottage in Melkinthorpe. Stay at characterful red-stoned Elk Cottage in Glassonby and you'll get a grandstand view too, courtesy of its hilltop garden. From August 16 five nights' self-catering for four is down 15 per cent to £877 (ruralretreats.co.uk).

Self-guided walking on Exmoor

If you long for a refreshing breeze after all the stifling heat, this self-guided Exmoor walking holiday should do nicely. Based in HF Holidays' Holnicote House near Selworthy, it has had a 50 per cent price cut. One week's full board from August 28 starts at £584pp, with a long menu of hikes to whet your appetite once you've settled in (hfholidays.co.uk). The national park's highest point at Dunkery Beacon lies three miles south. Culbone, where Coleridge composed *Kubla Khan*, is four miles to the west. Expect yawning sea views and a great wash of purple heather in between.

EUROPE

Explore Croatia's Adriatic coast

A rich and varied taste of the Adriatic awaits on Travelsphere's guided Croatia Uncovered tour. Beginning in Split, you'll travel north to take in the forests and waterfalls of Krka National Park as well as the historic coastal towns of Zadar and Sibenik, before joining a seven-night cruise aboard the MV Adriatic Pearl. The circular route loops southwards down to Dubrovnik and calls in at the islands of Korcula, Hvar and Mljet, among others, before returning to Trogir. From September 16 ten nights' B&B costs £2,809pp, including flights and some extra meals. That's a £700 saving (travelsphere.co.uk).

A week on Paxos

You have to catch a ferry from Corfu to reach little Paxos but it's worth the hassle for the peace and quiet you'll find when you get there. Sunvil and GIC The Villa Collection are deepening its allure with a range of August-only holidays, and among the plums to be picked is a week at Villa Yakovos. Set in the underpopulated south, it's a handsome two-bedroom house with sea views from its pool terrace and the family-friendly beach beckoning at Mongonissi nearby. From August 17 seven nights' self-catering for four is down £663 to £1,033pp, including flights and car hire (gicthevillacollection.com).

A beautiful Alpine chalet in France

Summer breezes are a little cooler at an altitude of 3,500ft, which is where you'll find Chalet Le Meridien Etale in the French Alps. Just below the village of Manigod, it occupies the two lower floors of a sensitively restored farmhouse and is one of several August discounts on the Ovo Network's special offers pages. Expect creaking floors, ancient beams and gorgeous mountain views, as well as a mind-boggling array of activities in the surrounding villages, from gentle walks to high-ropes courses and canyoning. From August 22 seven nights' self-catering for seven is down 25 per cent to £1,191 (ovonetwork.com). Fly to Geneva or drive.

Keep cool in a Puglian villa

Puglia's traditional conical houses are built to withstand the southern Italian heat but Trullo Iana near Cisternino is air-conditioned, just to be sure. The limestone property has a modern extension too, as well as a pool and a shaded summer kitchen. The hilltop town of Ostuni is 15 minutes' drive away, whenever you fancy a sense of history. The nearest beach is not much further. It's one of several properties discounted on Simpson Travel's late-availability pages, and seven nights' self-catering for six from August 15 costs £3,768 (simpsontravel.com). Fly to Brindisi.

Get active in the Norwegian fjords

Yes, the Norwegian fjords are a joy to behold. They're a giant playground too, as you'll discover on this short but energetic Norwegian Fjords Adventure in late August. For three days you'll be sallying forth from your upmarket hotel in Voss, not only looking at the landscape but rafting, kayaking, ebiking and ziplining through it. The level of physical challenge is moderate rather than gruelling but a head for heights and a love of mountains and water are essential. From August 26 four nights' B&B is down £430 to £2,469pp (exodus.co.uk). Fly to Bergen.

A gastronomic European cruise

The luxury cruise line Silversea has been fine-tuning its gastronomic S.A.L.T. programme, which celebrates the food and drink of its ports of call with onboard demonstrations, tastings and menus. Now it's taking the concept a step further with dedicated culinary voyages. This France, Spain and Portugal itinerary, which sails from Southampton on September 19, is one of the first and is discounted by 30 per cent. Expect a rich mix of grape harvesting, pintxos tasting and farmers' market tours amid the excursions. Eleven nights' all-inclusive starts from £6,540pp (silversea.com). Fly back from Lisbon.

LONG HAUL

Highlights of Sri Lanka

You should expect occasional downpours on this October 18 to November 1 edition of Intrepid's 15-day Best of Sri Lanka guided tour. But the weather will be beginning to dry out and peak-season crowds will not yet have flooded moody and magnificent sites such as the 1,550-year-old rock fortress of Sigiriya. In other words, the 20 per cent discount offered on the trip looks tempting. So too does its rich mix of monuments, markets and meetings with the locals. There's even a day of beach time in the schedule, at Mirissa on the south coast. Fourteen nights' B&B starts at £1,470 (intrepidtravel.com). Fly to Colombo.

Cruise the Antarctic peninsula

The expedition cruise specialist Swan Hellenic champions a low-impact approach. This ten-day Antarctic Wonders itinerary departing on November 11 is a case in point. Sailing from Ushuaia, the SH Minerva will explore the Antarctic peninsula through a programme of Zodiac landings and expert-led excursions, with minimum viewing distances and protocols followed throughout. Back on board you'll find a deep sense of comfort alongside fascinating wildlife talks and scientific research. Book a balcony cabin and you'll get a £2,000 discount, with nine nights' all-inclusive down to £7,350pp (swanhellenic.com). Call 020 3503 1130 to book. Fly to Buenos Aires.

An island escape on Mauritius

Usually May is when the southeastern trade winds begin to blow on Mauritius. They can bring insistent breezes and troubled seas on exposed coasts but lovely weather on the sheltered western side, where conditions are drier, sunnier and less humid than during summer. All of which makes this Kuoni offer a good reason to plan ahead. On select dates in May 2027 seven nights' B&B at the leafy, five-star Oberoi Beach Resort start at £2,349pp, including flights and three free nights as part of the deal (kuoni.co.uk).

Sean Newsom

ESCORTED TOUR cruise.co.uk ONLY BOOKABLE THROUGH

cruise.co.uk
THE REAL CRUISE PEOPLE

ESCORTED CAVES & FAIRY CHIMNEYS OF CAPPADOCIA

WITH TURKEY & GREEK ISLES CRUISING

No Deposit & Interest-Free Monthly Payments

ESCORTED TOUR
Of Cappadocia - A UNESCO World Heritage Site

4★ STAY
In a Unique Cave Hotel In Cappadocia, Turkey

SUNRISE
Breakfast In Cappadocia

11-NIGHT
Mediterranean Cruise Onboard Enchanted Princess

YOUR 16-NIGHT INCREDIBLE ITINERARY

YOUR ESCORTED TOUR BEGINS

DAY 1: FLY UK TO CAPPADOCIA, TURKEY
Regional Departure Airports Available*

Today you will fly from the UK to Cappadocia, Turkey. After touching down in Cappadocia, you will be transferred to your cave hotel for a 4-night stay.

Your Hotel

FRESCO CAVE SUITES
Fresco Cave Suites is nestled in the heart of Cappadocia's old city centre. With a blend of historical ambience and modern comfort, this hidden gem offers a unique experience. Indulge at the Nalin Cave Spa's Turkish bath, experience authentic Anatolian culture, and taste traditional cuisine in the hotel's Tandoor restaurant.

DAY 2: CAPPADOCIA, TURKEY
Included Escorted Tour: North Cappadocia
Your guided tour kicks off today with a visit to Uçhisar Castle (the highest vantage point in Cappadocia), Göreme Open Air Museum, and Çavuşin- an old village known for its abandoned cave houses from Greek times. After lunch, enjoy a pottery workshop, a handwoven carpets workshop, visit Paşabağı, where you can admire the fascinating three-headed fairy chimneys, and explore Devrent Valley- home to natural rock formations that resemble animals. Your tour will end at the Three Beauties; a stunning trio of fairy chimneys that serve as a symbol of Cappadocia.
Breakfast & Lunch Included

DAY 3: CAPPADOCIA, TURKEY
Included Escorted Tour: Sunrise Breakfast
Today, you'll get up early and head to a stunning nearby viewpoint to enjoy a delightful breakfast as you watch the hot air balloons gracefully ascend above Cappadocia's remarkable rock formations. After breakfast, your guide will take you back to your hotel, where you can spend the day discovering the historical treasures of Cappadocia at your leisure. If you're looking to elevate your experience here, consider adding a sunrise hot air balloon ride with breakfast. Just ask your consultant for more details!
Breakfast Included

Included With Your ESCORTED TAILOR MADE EXPERIENCE...

- ✓ 4-night 4★ cave hotel stay blending modern comfort with traditional charm, offering an immersive, unique experience
- ✓ 1-night 4★ hotel stay in Istanbul
- ✓ 4-night escorted tour of Cappadocia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ✓ Return flights & overseas transfers
- ✓ Visit Athens, Santorini & Mykonos during your cruise
- ✓ 11-night cruise onboard Enchanted Princess
- ✓ Visit Goreme Open Air Museum, Devrent Valley and Pigeon Valley
- ✓ Regional airports available*
- ✓ Dedicated cruise.co.uk expert consultant
- ✓ Fully protected - your holiday is safe with us as we are fully ABTA & ATOL bonded
- ✓ We are the experts! For over 40 years we have been creating industry leading cruise & stay itineraries

DAY 4: CAPPADOCIA, TURKEY
Included Escorted Tour: South Cappadocia
Today, you'll venture on an exciting full-day trek through Ihlara Valley. You'll explore stunning churches adorned with beautiful frescoes, covering a walking distance of approximately 4 km. After lunch, you'll visit Selime Cathedral and the remarkable Ozkonak Underground City, known for being one of the best-preserved underground cities in Cappadocia. On the way back to the hotel, you'll see Pigeon Valley and admire the unique pigeon houses built for collecting guano.
Breakfast & Lunch Included

DAY 5: FLY CAPPADOCIA TO ISTANBUL, TURKEY
After checking out of your hotel, you will be transferred to the airport for your short flight to Istanbul. Upon arrival in the city, you will be transferred to your 4★ hotel for a 1-night stay. ***Breakfast Included***

DAY 6: EMBARK ENCHANTED PRINCESS IN INSTANBUL, TURKEY
This morning, you will be transferred to the port in Istanbul where you will embark Enchanted Princess for your 11-night cruise.

DAY 7: ISTANBUL, TURKEY

DAY 8: KUSADASI, TURKEY

DAY 9: RHODES, GREECE

DAY 10: MYKONOS, GREECE

DAY 11: CRETE, GREECE

DAY 13: VALLETTA, MALTA

DAY 14: MESSINA, ITALY

DAY 15: PALERMO, ITALY

DAY 16: NAPLES, ITALY

DAY 17: DISEMBARK IN ROME (CIVITAVECCHIA), ITALY & FLY TO UK
Regional Arrival Airports Available*
Today, it's time to head home. After disembarking your ship, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to the UK.

Price & Itinerary based on 12 Oct 2028, itinerary may vary on other dates

AVAILABLE DATES

Date/£pp	Inside	Ocean View	Balcony
12 Oct 2028	3399	3499	3499

Price Includes In-Resort Fees & Taxes

Also Available With Princess, NCL, MSC & Cunard Cruises...

PRINCESS

Date/£pp	Inside	Ocean View	Balcony
21 May 2027	3599	3799	3799
03 Sep 2027	3599	3799	3799
13 Oct 2027	2799	2799	2899
23 Apr 2028	3299	3599	3599
30 Apr 2028	3199	3499	3499

CUNARD

Date/£pp	Inside	Ocean View	Balcony
16 May 2027	2599	2699	2699
03 Oct 2027	2699	2799	2899
18 May 2028	3799	4199	4199

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

Date/£pp	Inside	Ocean View	Balcony
02 Sep 2026	3899	3999	3999

MSC

Date/£pp	Inside	Ocean View	Balcony
15 Jun 2027	2799	2899	2999
04 Sep 2027	2799	2999	2999

Scan me to view all available dates

TALK TO ONE OF OUR FRIENDLY CRUISE CONSULTANTS TODAY

0800 408 6205

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 9pm | Sunday 10am - 8pm

ABTA 78024 ATOL IATA

TO GET THIS OFFER QUOTE CODE **TIMES-CAVES**

All fares are per person based on two adults sharing. No deposit & interest-free monthly payments is based on our interest free monthly payments scheme which is applicable to selected 2027-2028 cruises when booked more than 9 months in advance of sailing, please speak to your consultant to confirm the date of your 1st monthly installment. Please speak to your consultant for more details. Cruise.co.uk reserves the right to amend or change the terms of this promotion without prior notice or announcement. Some of our packages include elements that are natural occurrences, such as flower seasons and wildlife viewings. However, your viewing of such elements cannot be guaranteed and is subject to change based on weather conditions, climate change, and Wildlife sightings. Please see Cruise.co.uk for full terms and conditions. Calls are recorded for Marketing & Training Purposes. E&OE

An Aegean Odyssey

OCEAN

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS PLUS TRANSFERS

11 DAYS FROM

£4,239

PER PERSON

WITH SO MUCH INCLUDED:

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite, plus three nights in five-star hotels in Istanbul and Athens
- Full board while on-board the cruise and daily breakfast in hotels
- Return scheduled flights plus transfers
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides
- Services of a Riviera Travel Tour Manager

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES:

- Eight visits and tours including guided tours of the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, the Hippodrome and Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Pergamon, Milos, Chios, Patmos, Athens with the Acropolis and Acropolis Museum, and a visit to Monemvasia

Embrace the history of the greatest ancient civilisations, legendary cities at the crossroads of eastern and western cultures, and picturesque islands in the glistening Aegean. Discover some of the world's most spectacular classical legacies, from Athens, the birthplace of democracy and crucible of civilisation, theatre and philosophy to the exotic mystique of Istanbul, with its wondrous architecture and intriguing Eastern ambience.

Day 1 - Arrival in Athens
Day 2 - Athens and Board the Star Flyer
Day 3 - Monemvasia
Day 4 - Milos
Day 5 - Patmos
Day 6 - Chios
Day 7 - Pergamon
Day 8 - Day at sea
Day 9 - Istanbul
Day 10 - Istanbul
Day 11 - Return Home

RIVIERA TRAVEL

Which? Recommended Provider ESCORTED TOURS

Call now to book

0808 231 3272

thetimes.com/riviera-clf

TIMES Travel Partner

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins/rooms are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. See website for full details.

Holland America

✔ 5★ SERVICE, WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US ✔ ABTA & ATOL PROTECTED
✔ THE UK'S NO.1 INDEPENDENT CRUISE SPECIALIST ✔ UNBEATABLE VALUE

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE 5★ NO-FLY 2028
ALL-INCLUSIVE PROMOTION
FIRST WEEK ON SALE

INCLUDED ON BOARD SPEND OF UP TO $400

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS WITH ROL CRUISE

INCLUDED DRINKS, GRATUITIES, WI-FI, SHORE EXCURSION CREDIT & MORE++

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 7TH AUGUST 2026

BOOK WITH A DEPOSIT THEN NOTHING TO PAY UNTIL NEXT YEAR

CANARY ISLAND ENCHANTMENT WITH MOROCCO & PORTUGAL

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 31ST MARCH, 29TH SEPTEMBER & 27TH OCTOBER 2028

Embark *Nieuw Statendam* and depart Dover – Rotterdam, Netherlands – Porto (from Leixoes), Portugal – Lisbon, Portugal – Agadir, Morocco – Arrecife, Lanzarote – Santa Cruz, Tenerife – Funchal, Madeira – Arrive in Dover

YOUR EXCLUSIVE LAUNCH FARES FROM

STATEROOM/SUITE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Interior‹	~~£2,864~~	£2,799
Ocean View‹	~~£3,334~~	£3,269
Verandah†	~~£3,494~~	£3,429
Vista Suite	~~£4,034~~	£3,959
Neptune Suite	~~£6,454~~	£6,299

Solo fares are available from **£4,499**

Itinerary, fares & availability are based on 27th October 2028 and vary on other dates

ARCTIC CIRCLE CROSSING & THE NORTH CAPE

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 12TH MAY, 9TH JUNE & 7TH JULY 2028

Embark *Nieuw Statendam* and depart Dover – Rotterdam, Netherlands – Nordfjordeid, Norway – *Scenic Cruising Nordfjord* – Alesund, Norway – Trondheim, Norway – *Cruising Trondheimsfjord* – Honningsvag, Norway – *Scenic Cruising North Cape* – Tromso, Norway – Andalsnes, Norway – Stavanger, Norway – Lerwick, Shetland Islands – Arrive in Dover

YOUR EXCLUSIVE LAUNCH FARES FROM

STATEROOM/SUITE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Interior‹	~~£2,939~~	£2,879
Ocean View‹	~~£3,309~~	£3,249
Verandah†	~~£3,819~~	£3,749
Vista Suite	~~£4,329~~	£4,249
Neptune Suite	~~£7,159~~	£6,999

Solo fares are available from **£4,599**

Itinerary, fares & availability are based on 12th May 2028 and vary on other dates

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All-inclusive cruising on board the 5★ *Nieuw Statendam*, including:
- **INCLUDED 'HAVE IT ALL PLUS' PACKAGE FEATURES++:**
  - **Shore Excursion Credit** of up to **$400** per couple
  - **Elite Drinks Package** including top shelf wine, beer, spirits and cocktails, plus non-alcoholic options like sodas, specialty coffees and more – with service charges included
  - Up to **two nights** in a **Speciality Dining** restaurant
  - Crew Appreciation
  - **Premium Wi-Fi** Package
  - Plus, up to **$400** on board spend per couple
- Elegant mid-sized ships designed for space, comfort and sophistication
- Live music from B.B. King's Blues Club, Billboard Onboard and Rolling Stone Lounge
- Regionally inspired menus, fresh local ingredients and flavours that reflect the places you visit
- Immersive destination experiences, with thoughtfully crafted itineraries and shore excursions
- **PLUS**, book by 8pm 7th August 2026 to receive an **EXCLUSIVE FREE** Case of Wine+

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® SAVE EVERY TIME YOU BOOK
worth **£££s** off your next booking††

SCANDINAVIAN CAPITALS

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 14TH APRIL , 23RD JUNE & 18TH AUGUST 2028

Embark *Nieuw Statendam* and depart Dover – Rotterdam, Netherlands – Copenhagen, Denmark – Aarhus, Denmark – Berlin (from Warnemunde), Germany – Tallinn, Estonia – Helsinki, Finland – Stockholm, Sweden (overnight) – Skagen, Denmark – Arrive in Dover

YOUR EXCLUSIVE LAUNCH FARES FROM

STATEROOM/SUITE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Interior‹	~~£2,934~~	£2,879
Ocean View‹	~~£3,364~~	£3,299
Verandah†	~~£3,854~~	£3,779
Vista Suite	~~£4,354~~	£4,269
Neptune Suite	~~£7,104~~	£6,969

Solo fares are available from **£4,499**

Itinerary, fares & availability are based on 14th April 2028 and vary on other dates

WILD BRITISH ISLES

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 4TH AUGUST 2028

Embark *Nieuw Statendam* and depart Dover – Rotterdam, Netherlands – Edinburgh (from Newhaven), Scotland (overnight) – Invergordon, Scotland – Portree, Isle of Skye – Belfast, Northern Ireland – Glasgow (from Greenock), Scotland – Liverpool, England – Dublin (from Dun Laoghaire), Ireland – Cork, Ireland – Arrive in Dover

YOUR EXCLUSIVE LAUNCH FARES FROM

STATEROOM/SUITE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Interior‹	~~£3,259~~	£3,199
Ocean View‹	~~£3,799~~	£3,729
Verandah†	~~£4,199~~	£4,119
Vista Suite	~~£5,079~~	£4,979
Neptune Suite	~~£8,159~~	£7,999

Solo fares are available from **£5,099**

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE ABTA ABTA No F9255

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON

0808 239 7876
QUOTE OFFER REF **644622**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot ★★★★★

Platinum Trusted Service Award feefo

Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off 30/07/2026. Fares may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offers apply to new bookings only. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. †Denotes obstructed view. ‹Stateroom is on a guarantee basis. +Gift is based on one per booking, for UK mainland addresses only. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Holland America T&Cs apply. E&OE.

Your call answered in 3 rings

020·7962·9933

Amazing Asia

Let us create your perfect holiday. You'll love the experience

Enjoy a kaleidoscope of cultures, idyllic beaches, friendly locals and world class cuisine when you book a trip to Asia.

Explore the amazing temples, browse the colourful markets and discover its fascinating history whilst staying and dining in luxury hotels or on a fabulous tour.

Call our travel team today and wherever you decide to go, you can expect to make new memories.

2 free nights

Four Seasons Resort Langkawi 5*

7 nights fr £**2,039**pp
Flights, hotel & transfers

Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, Thailand 5*

Save 30%

Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £**1,019**pp

Colours of Japan escorted tour 4*

Save £200

Flights, hotels & transfers - 9 nights fr £**3,519**pp

Shangri-La Singapore 5*

A luxurious sanctuary in the heart of the city, tucked away from the hustle and bustle, nestled within 15 acres of landscaped tropical gardens. With a large swimming pool, kid's splash pool, health club, spa and a truly inspiring dining experience.

Save £150

Flights, hotel & transfers - 3 nights fr £**999**pp

Shangri-La Rasa Ria, Borneo 5*

Escape out of the city and journey into nature, where the sea meets the rainforest. Soak in the sun on the private beach, dine in one of six unique restaurants & enjoy the great outdoors.

Save 40%

7 nights fr £**1,189**pp
Flights, hotel & transfers

Harbour Grand Kowloon, Hong Kong 5*

Enjoy the hustle and bustle of the city at this great value hotel, perfectly placed on the waterfront at Victoria Harbour, it offers a luxurious private retreat with the opportunity to experience amazing Hong Kong from a prime vantage point.

Save 30%

Flights, hotel & transfers - 3 nights fr £**765**pp

Highlights of Vietnam tour 4*

Vietnam is one of the world's most fascinating countries and the friendly people are always so welcoming to visitors. And on this comprehensive 11 day private tour, which begins in the north at Hanoi and ends in the south at Ho Chi Minh, you see all the main highlights.

Save £200

10 nights fr £**2,919**pp
Flights, hotels & transfers

Rayavadee, Krabi, Thailand 5*

Save 15%

Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £**1,999**pp

Nusa Dua Beach Hotel & Spa 5*

This luxury hotel resembles a Balinese Palace and provides unique Balinese hospitality. Located on the southern peninsula with direct beach access and sea views, you can also enjoy several pools, tropical gardens, a spa and a choice of dining options.

Save 30%

Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £**1,195**pp

The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui, Thailand 5*

Save 20%

Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £**1,509**pp

CLIENT TRUST ACCOUNT

ATOL Protected

ABTA ABTA No 76705

DialAFlight

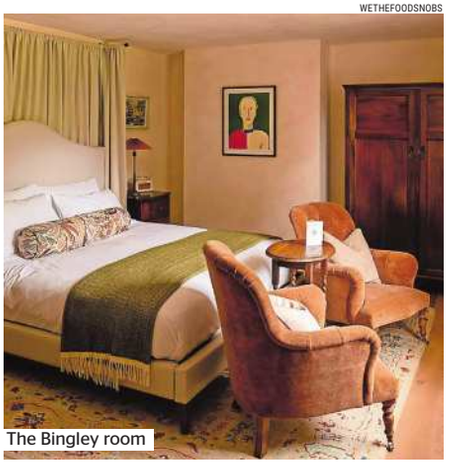
Your travel. Personally crafted

The Times hotel guide
The Candover
Hampshire

Rooms and suites 8/10
Food and drink 9/10
Where is it? 8/10
Overall score 8/10

The terrace

WETHEFOODSNOBS


The Bingley room

The best plans are always hatched over a drink; the trouble is most of us can't remember them the next day. Fortunately, the three friends whose lunch overran by several bottles woke up still convinced they couldn't let their village pub be converted into housing. So they poured plenty of love into transforming the 16th-century inn formerly known as the Purefoy Arms, south of Basingstoke, into the Candover, a welcoming gastropub with rooms.

Rooms and suites

If your pub's in Hampshire, you have to give a nod to the county's beloved daughter, Jane Austen. Thankfully, the Candover hasn't gone for the full-on Mrs Bennet's bonnet theme. Instead, the ten rooms are named after dashing Austen characters and have been styled by Rebecca Haines-Gadd. There are hints of trendiness in the mid-century armchairs, art nouveau mirrors and limewashed walls, but four-poster and half-tester beds (all super-kingsize) and antique armoires add cosiness. All have tiled bathrooms and toiletries by Reia. The family rooms have private patios, cute bunk beds and baths. Only the two largest rooms, Bingley and Darcy, have tubs. Rates are at the pointy end for a pub.

Food and drink

Downstairs is divided by a showstopping oak horseshoe bar with an aged-brass counter. The drinkers' side has three open fireplaces, with spindle-back seats, bottle-green banquettes, sunset-pink sink-in sofas and a piano. Ale lovers will probably be interested in the Candover Best, the house bitter from the local brewery Triple fff, at £5.55 a pint. The diners' side is in a new conservatory loaded with bistro ambience. The head chef, Oli Abbott, whips up bar snacks such as anchovy and courgette for £1 and brown-crab crumpets for £2. The chicken Kyiv (£16.50) has a creamy leek filling and is delicious, and the banoffee pie (£5) has proved so popular that it's been added to the breakfast menu.

Susan d'Arcy was a guest of the Candover, which has B&B doubles from £240; mains from £14 (thecandover.com)

What else does it offer?

There's a snooker room, a large suntrap terrace and a small playground area.

Where is it?

It's 30 minutes to Winchester to pay your respects to Austen. Guests have access to Candover Brook, a vineyard responsible for the pub's sparkling wine. The Wild Sauna at the Yard, a three-minute drive, means you don't have to forgo your contrast therapy obsession (£22pp, wild-sauna.com).

Susan d'Arcy

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Bed and Breakfast

FIVE NIGHTS FROM
£379*
per person

Price includes

- Return flights from various UK airports
- Five nights at the Hotel Hyatt Centric Malta
- Daily breakfast
- Gozo full-day tour with a guide, temples, and train

Prices from per month

August 2026 from **£649pp** • September 2026 from **£589pp** • October 2026 from **£469pp** • November 2026 from **£399pp** • December 2026, January and February 2027 from **£379pp** • March 2027 from **£399pp**

Premium Malta Retreat
AT HYATT CENTRIC MALTA

August 2026 to March 2027

Discover the rich history, vibrant culture and Mediterranean charm of Malta on this five-night luxury escape. Stay at the stylish five-star Hyatt Centric Malta and enjoy daily breakfast before exploring the island's picturesque streets, waterfront cafés and historic landmarks. Your holiday also includes a full-day guided excursion to neighbouring Gozo, featuring ancient temples, scenic landscapes and a charming train ride, offering the perfect introduction to one of the Mediterranean's most captivating destinations.

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

CALL TODAY ON
0808 239 8093
thetimes.com/td-malta
QUOTE TIMES

Our trusted partner travelodeal | ABTA Travel with confidence

*Prices are correct at the time of going to print. The lead price is based on travel in various dates between August 2026 to March 2027. Prices listed are based on two adults sharing a double /twin room/cabin and departing from a London airport. Single travellers and regional departures are available at a supplement. Tour is operated by Travelodeal Ltd ABTA P8297 ATOL11601, a company wholly independent of News UK.

Luxury Travel since 1927

✔ THE UK'S NO.1 INDEPENDENT CRUISE SPECIALIST
✔ ABTA & ATOL PROTECTED ✔ UNBEATABLE VALUE

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE EXCLUSIVE 2027 *Vietnam & Cambodia*

EXCLUSIVE RIVER CRUISE SALE

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 50%±

14 nights departing 16th & 30th January, 27th February and 27th March 2027

Other dates are available – please call for details

Day 1 **Fly overnight from London to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**

Day 2 **Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**
Upon arrival, transfer to the *Sheraton Saigon Grand Opera Hotel – Grand Opera Tower*‡ for your two night stay
★Signature Experience×: VIP Fast Track Service
Start your holiday as soon as possible when you receive Fast Track Service for a seamless arrival in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Be whisked through immigration and customs

Day 3 **Cu Chi Tunnels – Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**
Visit the Cu Chi tunnels, built by Vietnamese resistance fighters during the Vietnam War
★Signature Experience×: Cu Chi Tunnels Visit, Private Gin Tasting & Dinner and Vietnam House

Day 4 **Ho Chi Minh City – My Tho, Vietnam**
Embark ***Mekong Serenity*** for your seven night Mekong Cruise. Choose from a City Walking Tour, Motorbike Ride, Cooking Class, Ho Chi Minh City Shopping Adventure or History of Saigon tour. In the evening, enjoy a special Welcome Dinner on board

Day 5 **Cai Be – Sa Dec – Tan Chau, Vietnam**
Go ashore to see the Cai Be Church, the tallest church in the Mekong Delta with its impressive bell tower, and visit manufacturers of rice paper and coconut candy

Day 6 **Tan Chau – Cambodia Border Crossing – Phnom Penh**
Transfer to a small boat for a journey along the tiny tributaries that snake around Tan Chau. Disembark for a rickshaw tour and visit a local rattan weaving workshop. After lunch, take a small boat to discover authentic rural life on Evergreen Island

Day 7 **Phnom Penh, Cambodia**
Today, choose from a visit to Killing Fields and Genocide Museum, Cyclo Ride, the National Museum or Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda

Day 8 **Phnom Penh – Oudong – Koh Chen, Cambodia**
★Signature Experience: Buddhist blessing ceremony

Day 9 **Phnom Penh – Oknha Tey – Angkor Ban, Cambodia**

Day 10 **Angkor Ban – Koh Pen – Kampong Cham, Cambodia**
Take a guided walk of Angkor Ban, a village awash with stories of Cambodia's cultural history, and one of the few traditional villages that survived the Khmer Rouge regime
★Signature Experience: Tuk Tuk Tour of Koh Pen

Day 11 **Kampong Cham – Siem Reap, Cambodia**
Disembark the ship and transfer to the *Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf & Spa Resort*‡ for your three night stay

Day 12 **Siem Reap, Cambodia**
★Signature Experience: Sunrise at Angkor Wat

Day 13 **Siem Reap, Cambodia**
Choose from Tuk Tuk Ride to Senteurs d'Angkor, Quad Bike Adventure, APOPO HeroRATs Tour and Landmine Museum, Horse and Cart Ride, Khmer Cooking Class, Siem Reap Shopping Adventure or Khmer Massage
★Signature Experience: Gallery Visit with Khmer Dinner and Apsara Performance

Day 14 **Siem Reap, Cambodia**
Transfer to airport for overnight flight to London

Day 15 **Arrive in London**

Itinerary is based on 30th January 2027 and other dates may operate in reverse

Your Highlights

★Sunrise at Angkor Wat★
★Khmer Dinner & Apsara Performance★
★Tuk Tuk Tour of Koh Pen★
★Buddhist Blessing Ceremony★

STATEROOMS SELLING FAST

SIGHTSEEING EXCURSIONS INCLUDED

DRINKS, GRATUITIES & WI-FI INCLUDED++

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 5TH AUGUST 2026

What's Included

- **INCLUDED** hotel stays in Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap
- **SEVEN NIGHT** river cruise on board ***Mekong Serenity*** including++:
  - 28 quality meals: enjoy 11 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 9 dinners
  - **FREE** house wine, local beer and soft drinks served with lunch and dinner on board
  - Sightseeing, shore excursions and on board entertainment included
  - **★Unique Insider Experiences×:** Enjoy a range of included special and unique excursions and events
  - All overseas transfers, port charges and tipping
  - Services of a Cruise Director and local guides

Optional four day Halong Bay extension available – please call for details

- **Return scheduled flights from London** (regional flights may be available on request and overseas transfers)
- **PLUS**, book a Deluxe Twin (C) or above by 8pm 5th August 2026 to receive an extra discount of up to **£120±**

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® – SAVE EVERY TIME YOU BOOK
worth **£££s** off your next booking††

YOUR EXCLUSIVE ROL CRUISE FARES

STATEROOM/SUITE	GRADE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Deluxe Twin	E	~~£7,595~~	£3,699
Deluxe Twin	C	~~£7,890~~	£4,089
Bayon Suite	–	~~£8,589~~	£4,789

Solo fares are available on request

Fares and availability are based on the 30th January 2027 departure

SECURE THESE FARES WITH A DEPOSIT

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON

0808 239 7824
QUOTE OFFER REF **644624**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot ★★★★★

Platinum Trusted Service Award feefo

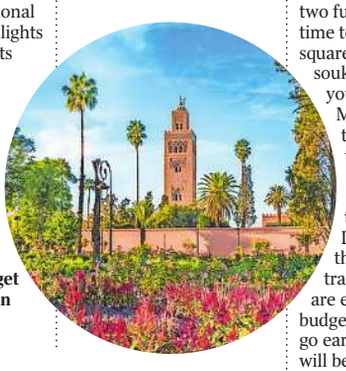
Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off 29/07/2026. Offer applies to new bookings only. ±Fares and savings are per person based on two adults sharing, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Flights may be indirect. A flight supplement may be required. Upgrades will incur supplementary costs and may require an additional overnight stay. ‡If the named hotels are unavailable a suitable alternative will be provided. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. ×Tours are subject to change and may not be suitable for guests with mobility restrictions. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Travelmarvel T&Cs apply. Agent to ATOL Holder – Travelmarvel (6781). E&OE.

Travel doctor Solving your holiday dilemmas

Julia Brookes
Consumer expert

MA RABELO/GETTY IMAGES

The River Nile, Egypt. Below: Koutoubia mosque, Marrakesh



Q I'm celebrating a big birthday on January 23 and my wife and I want to fly to Cairo to take in the Pyramids and the new archaeological museum, then do a cruise down the Nile. What we want above all is a proper sit-down meal in the evening, although nothing too formal. Our budget is about £10,000 for the two of us. Can you recommend any suitable cruise lines?
Nick Smith

A That sounds like an excellent plan, but you will have to bump up your budget if you want a "luxury" cruise such as AmaWaterways' ten-night Secrets of Egypt & the Nile, which includes a seven-night sailing from Luxor bookended by hotel stays in Cairo. If you picked the January 30 departure you'd be sailing on the AmaNubia, which has a high-end restaurant where dinner is typically a five-course affair (but not too formal), plus a resident Egyptologist. Prices start at £6,248pp including flights.

More affordable is Titan Travel's ten-night Cairo, Alexandria and a Nile Cruise itinerary, which squeezes in a full-day trip to Alexandria, the former capital of ancient Egypt. You'll get seven nights on the 110-passenger MS Nile Plaza, and a set menu is served each evening in the restaurant (there are buffets for breakfast and lunch). The Valley of the Queens, the Temple of Philae and an excursion on a traditional wooden felucca are among the highlights and it costs £3,795pp including flights and transport on the January 28 departure (titantravel.co.uk).

Q I'd like to celebrate my 60th birthday next July with a four or five-day trip to Morocco with my three grown-up sons. We'd like to see the Atlas Mountains and take in some culture, preferably flying from Stansted. We'd like transfers and not to hire a car. I have a budget of £3,000. Is that possible and when would be the best time to go?
Ronnie Lucia

A That's more than enough if you travel with the Morocco specialist Fleewinter, whose four-night Marrakesh and Atlas Mountains trip starts at £300pp. You get two full days in Marrakesh, plenty of time to see the sights, including the main square Jemaa el-Fnaa, the labyrinthine souks and the Jardin Majorelle. Then you'd get a full day in the Atlas Mountains, where you could stroll through the villages or do some trekking. The price includes B&B in the medina's Dar Rocmarra riad, with its plunge pool and roof terrace; the basic but comfortable Douar Samra, a Berber house in the village of Tamatert; and transfers (fleewinter.com). Flights are extra, and there's plenty of your budget left for these. You may prefer to go earlier or later in the year because it will be extremely hot in July. But it would be cooler in the mountains and the souks are covered, which helps.

Q During a holiday in Crete my wife discovered she had a fear of groups of feral cats. Since then we've mainly gone to the Canaries or Balearics but still think wistfully of the Greek islands. Do you know of any that have a negligible cat population?
Alan Heaton

A There are no cat-free areas of Greece, but many islands now have neutering services operated by charities, which has reduced the numbers. Dudley der Parthog, who drives across Greece every year checking properties for the tour operator Sunvil, told me: "I would recommend avoiding the busiest tavernas, where tourists tend to feed cats, and hunt out the small backstreet ones instead. Perhaps go self-catering so you have the possibility of dining alfresco on your terrace. However, even here there's no guarantee that a stray cat or two living nearby won't appear."

Q On June 8 easyJet cancelled our flight from Madeira to London because of high winds. We needed to return before June 12 because my wife had a hospital appointment, but the only alternative easyJet offered was a flight arriving too late. The airline said it could not provide accommodation and advised us to book our own, pay for meals and keep receipts. So we booked British Airways flights for June 11 and requested a refund. With our phone batteries running low, my wife's sister arranged the hotel in Funchal on our behalf. After returning to London I claimed our extra costs from easyJet. The airline refused to reimburse our replacement flights, taxis and meals because we had accepted a refund and rejected the hotel claim because it had been booked by my sister-in-law. I feel easyJet handled the situation very poorly and looked for reasons to avoid meeting its obligations. Do you agree?
John Gooch

A Too often passengers are left to their own devices after a cancellation, so it's vital to know your rights. Since your flight was with a UK or EU airline, the company must offer a full refund within seven days or an alternative flight as soon as possible. EasyJet said if a suitable alternative flight isn't available to book through its portal, which does include with other airlines, customers can book their own, which it would reimburse. But because you chose to request a refund for your original flights you wouldn't be able to receive that and claim for another flight. As for the hotel stay, the airline said it would reimburse you without receipts on this occasion as a gesture of goodwill.

Contact us

If you have a gripe, suggestion or question relating to your holidays, please email **traveldoctor@thetimes.co.uk**

Don't put up with this

An injury and costly car hire problems

I've returned from a short stay in Belgium and Germany during which I hired a car from Europcar. The pick-up and drop-off was in Brussels. I injured my left arm on the first day and was unable to drive because it was in a sling. I contacted their Brussels office and asked if it would be possible to drop the vehicle off at a local office in Lüdenscheid, western Germany. I was told it was and the Lüdenscheid office said it wouldn't be a problem; no fee was mentioned. When I returned the car Europcar was unable to give me the handover documentation but assured me it would follow by email. The next day I received it and was shocked to see a "repatriation charge" of £4,500 for driving the vehicle the 187 miles back to Brussels. I believe I've been grossly overcharged and am trying to get Europcar to reconsider this excessive fee. Can you help?
Stephen Gillian

I'm not surprised you were shocked — that's a ludicrous amount. Fortunately Europcar finally saw sense when it looked at your case again.

A spokesman said the repatriation required "dedicated logistics planning, including personnel to physically retrieve the vehicle, covering their travel, dedicated driving hours and return transit", but it appeared you weren't provided with all the relevant information regarding the cost of this. "The company has therefore reviewed the charges and has provided a new invoice for €500 (£426), which is in line with usual international one-way rental charges," they added.

TIMES Travel Partner

Enjoy the Spanish way of life in Andalucia, an enthralling destination boasting a mild Mediterranean climate. Admire the white-washed houses clinging to the hilltop towns of Mijas and Ronda, discover Picasso's birthplace, Malaga, and relax on Nerja's sandy beaches.

*Prices correct at time of print. Discount on selected departures only and already deducted from advertised price. Prices shown are based on single occupancy of a double or twin bedded room with private facilities and economy flights/rail travel where applicable. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Just You. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Just You, ABTA Y6412, ATOL 11266 a company wholly independent of News UK.

Our trusted partner just you | ABTA

CALL TODAY ON
0808 304 8832
thetimes.com/jy-andalucia
QUOTE TIMES

Regent SEVEN SEAS CRUISES

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 8TH AUGUST 2026

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE 2027 6★ ALL-INCLUSIVE NO-FLY FRANCE & SPAIN DISCOVERY

BRAND NEW SALE EVENT

SHORE EXCURSIONS×, DRINKS, GRATUITIES, WI-FI & SPECIALITY DINING INCLUDED++

ONLY BOOKABLE WITH ROL CRUISE

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 35%±

FREE CAR PARKING FOR ALL BOOKINGS

ULTIMATE LUXURY ON BOARD *SEVEN SEAS VOYAGER®*

Every suite on ***Seven Seas Voyager®*** has a private balcony along with marble bath accents and roomy closets. Sip a cup of coffee or glass of wine and dine alfresco on room service as you take in the endless views and fresh sea air.

Seven Seas Voyager® is designed for a holistic experience that makes the most of Regent Seven Seas Cruises'® all-inclusive fares and every luxury they include. Enjoy every space, from an elegant dining room to the quiet comfort of your private balcony. Join ***Seven Seas Voyager®*** after her extensive and thoughtfully executed Spring 2026 renovation.

12 NIGHTS DEPARTING 21ST AUGUST 2027 ON BOARD *SEVEN SEAS VOYAGER®*

AUGUST 2027

Sat 21 **Embark *Seven Seas Voyager®* and depart Southampton for your 12 night all-inclusive voyage**

Sun 22 **Falmouth, England**

Tue 24 - Wed 25 **Bordeaux (from Pauillac), France** (overnight)
★RECOMMENDED INCLUDED EXCURSION×:
Fort Medoc & wine tasting at Château Lanessan
Visit a 17th century fort that one of the greatest French military engineers built. Discover the strategic importance of Fort Medoc and why it has never been under siege. Explore a wine estate that has been in the same family for eight generations. Sample some of the extraordinary wines that Château Lanessan produces

Thu 26 **Biarritz (from St. Jean-De-Luz), France**

Fri 27 **Bilbao, Spain**

Sat 28 **Lorient, France**

Mon 30 **St. Malo, France**
★RECOMMENDED INCLUDED EXCURSION×:
Mystical Mont St. Michel
Revel in spectacular island-bound Mont Saint-Michel, one of the world's most photographed villages and a UNESCO World Heritage site

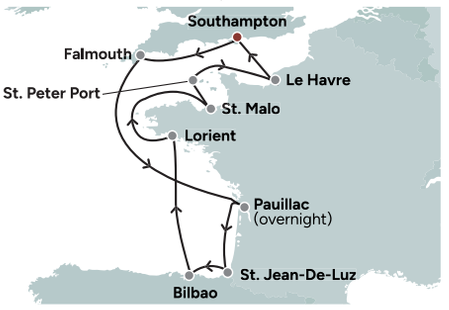
Tue 31 **St. Peter Port, Guernsey**

SEPTEMBER 2027

Wed 1 **Paris (from Le Havre), France**

Thu 2 **Arrive in Southampton**

Dates not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea



QUOTE '644623' TO SECURE THESE FARES

SUITE	GRADE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Deluxe Veranda Suite	H×	~~£9,639~~	**£6,199**
Deluxe Veranda Suite	F	~~£10,419~~	**£6,729**
Concierge Suite	E	~~£10,689~~	**£7,009**
Penthouse Suite	C	~~£11,319~~	**£7,419**
Penthouse Suite	A	~~£11,849~~	**£7,769**

SECURE YOUR TRIP WITH A DEPOSIT

SERVICE, QUALITY & TRUST WITH ROL CRUISE

- ☑ **5★ SERVICE, WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US**
- ☑ **THE UK'S NO.1 INDEPENDENT CRUISE SPECIALIST**
- ☑ **ABTA & ATOL PROTECTED**
- ☑ **UNBEATABLE VALUE**

WHAT'S INCLUDED

✓ **ONLY BOOKABLE WITH ROL CRUISE**
- **EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 35%±**
- **BOOK** by 8pm 8th August 2026 to receive a **FREE** Champagne Gift Box+
- Book with confidence, knowing you are securing exceptional value

✓ **FREE PORT CAR PARKING FOR ALL BOOKINGS**

✓ All-inclusive 6★ cruising on board the ultra-luxurious ***Seven Seas Voyager®***, including++:
- All suite, private balcony accommodation, only 698 guests on board
- Up to **59 INCLUDED** shore excursions×
- **INCLUDED** speciality restaurant dining throughout
- **INCLUDED** unlimited drinks including fine wines and premium spirits, plus in-suite mini-bar replenished daily
- **INCLUDED** pre-paid gratuities
- **INCLUDED** unlimited Wi-Fi for all suites
- **INCLUDED** butler service for Penthouse Suites and above
- **INCLUDED** 24-hour room service
- **INCLUDED** laundry valet

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® worth **£££s** off your next booking††

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE ABTA ABTA No F9255

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON **0808 239 7833**
QUOTE OFFER REF **644623**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award 2026 feefo

Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off (29/07/2026). Fares are per person based on two adults sharing, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. ×Suites are on a guaranteed basis. ±Savings are based on two guests sharing. ++Subject to cruise line T&Cs. ×Shore excursions are for example purposes only. Included shore excursions exclude Regent Choice Excursions and private arrangements. Further T&Cs apply. +Gift is based on one per booking, for UK mainland addresses only. Agent to ABTA holder (Regent) Y3266. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Regent Seven Seas Cruises® T&Cs apply. E&OE

A TOP PARTNER FOR SILVERSEA®

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 7TH AUGUST 2026

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE ULTRA-LUXURY *Caribbean*

PRICE DROP

DRINKS, GRATUITIES & WI-FI INCLUDED

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF OVER 30%±

SPECIAL FARES ONLY WITH ROL CRUISE

11 NIGHTS DEPARTING 20TH JANUARY 2027

JANUARY 2027

Wed 20 Fly from **London** to **Bridgetown, Barbados**
Upon arrival, transfer to the port and embark the ultra-luxurious ***Silver Shadow*** for your all-inclusive voyage

Thu 21 **Bequia, St. Vincent and The Grenadines**
Bequia, a hidden gem nestled in the heart of the Grenadines, is the Caribbean's best-kept secret

Fri 22 **Castries, St. Lucia**

Sat 23 **Trois-Îlets, Martinique**
Martinique is well known as France's favoured Caribbean isle, but it is the little commune of Trois Ilets where the two cultures really mesh together

Sun 24 **Roseau, Dominica**

Mon 25 **Les Saintes, Guadeloupe**
The archipelago of Guadeloupe is lush with multi-coloured shorelines, verdant vegetation and Franco-Caribbean culture

Tue 26 **Little Bay, Montserrat**

Wed 27 **Basseterre, St. Kitts**

Thu 28 **Gustavia, St. Barts**
Nestled on the picturesque island of Saint Barthélemy, Gustavia is a quaint harbour town exuding French charm

Fri 29 **St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands**
St. John is a beautiful Caribbean island known for its crystal-clear waters, white-sand beaches, and lush tropical landscapes

Sat 30 **San Juan, Puerto Rico**
Disembark and transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to London

Sun 31 **Arrive in London**

FARES ARE INCREASING – PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

SUITE	GRADE	FULL FARE (PP)	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Vista Suite	VI	~~£6,738~~	**£4,479**
Classic Veranda Suite	CV	**– SOLD OUT–**	
Superior Veranda Suite	SV	~~£8,038~~	**£5,269**
Deluxe Veranda Suite	DX	~~£8,388~~	**£5,489**

HIGHER SUITES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Solo fares are available from **£7,999**

SECURE TODAY WITH JUST A DEPOSIT

WHAT'S INCLUDED

EXCLUSIVE FARES ONLY AVAILABLE WITH ROL CRUISE - BOOK BEFORE THEY INCREASE
EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF OVER 30%±

- **10 NIGHT** all-inclusive voyage on board the ultra-luxurious ***Silver Shadow***, including++:
  - **INCLUDED** Unlimited Wi-Fi & Gratuities
  - **INCLUDED** Butler service for all suites
  - **INCLUDED** Premium Drinks in-suite and throughout the ship, including champagne, selected wines and spirits, plus your own tailored minibar replenished daily
  - Superlative service with a staff-to-guest ratio of nearly 1:1
  - In-suite dining and 24-hour room service
  - Multiple restaurants, diverse cuisine, open seating dining
- **PLUS**, book by 8pm 7th August 2026 to receive an **EXCLUSIVE FREE** £20 M&S Card+
- **RETURN FLIGHTS FROM LONDON** (regional and premium class flights may be available on request>) and all overseas transfers

15% OFF TRAVEL INSURANCE^^ - Please call for more information

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® - SAVE EVERY TIME YOU BOOK
worth **£££s** off your next booking††

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE ABTA

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON **0808 239 3129**
QUOTE OFFER REF **644620**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award 2026 feefo

Fares and availability correct at time of sign off 28/07/2026. Fares are per person based on two adults sharing, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. ±Savings based on two adults sharing. Flight schedules are subject to change and may be indirect. Final timings are confirmed closer to departure. >Will incur a charge. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. ^^15% off travel insurance is only applicable when making a new booking with ROL Cruise quoting SUMMER15, further terms and conditions apply. +Gift is based on one per booking, for UK mainland addresses only. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Silversea T&Cs apply. Agent to ATOL Holder Silversea (4681) E&OE.

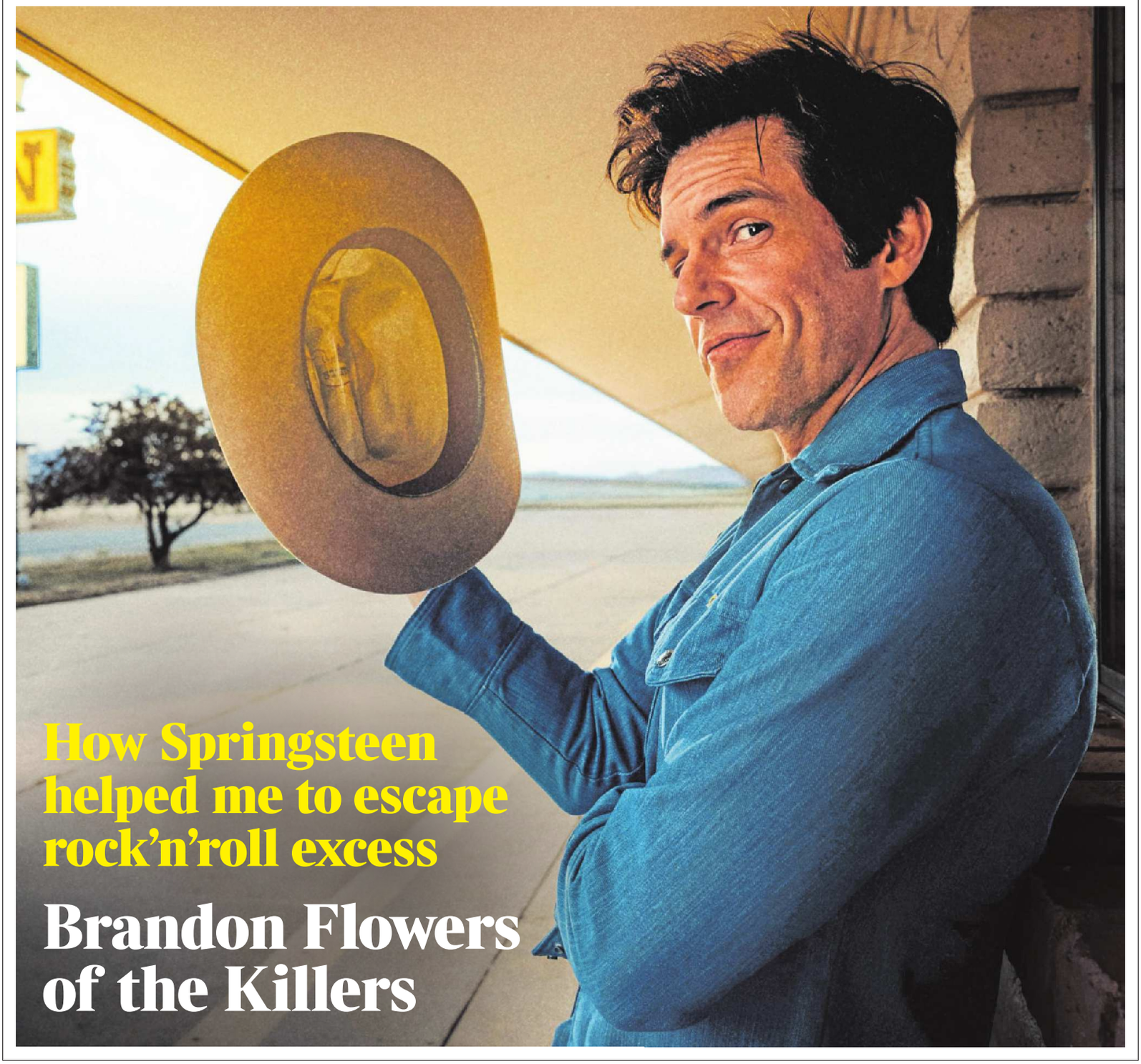
THE TIMES

Saturday August 1 2026

saturday review

Inside Your 7-day guide to TV, radio and films

Slumdog and me
Sathnam Sanghera meets its creator



How Springsteen helped me to escape rock'n'roll excess

Brandon Flowers of the Killers

NOW IN THE WEST END, ON BROADWAY AND TOURING THE UK
★★★★★
LONDON THEATRE REVIEWS
★★★★★
WEST END BEST FRIEND
★★★★
THE GUARDIAN
★★★★
THE TIMES
★★★★
FINANCIAL TIMES
★★★★
EVENING STANDARD
★★★★
THE TELEGRAPH
★★★★
SUNDAY EXPRESS
★★★★
MIRROR
★★★★
TIME OUT
★★★★
METRO
★★★★
SFX
★★★★
WHATSONSTAGE
★★★★
THE STAGE
"THE YEAR'S BEST STAGED PRODUCTION"
LA TIMES
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY
A NEW STORY LIVE ON STAGE
WRITTEN BY
LEVI HOLLOWAY
DIRECTED BY
FELIX BARRETT
"LEAVES YOU SPELLBOUND.
JAW-CLENCHINGLY, ARM-CLUTCHINGLY THRILLING."
THE GUARDIAN
MELTING POT
ParanormalOnStage.com
TM & © 2025 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved

What to do this week by our critics

My hot ticket

Clive Davis
chief theatre critic

Cats

If your tastes incline towards the whimsical, then the alfresco revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Cats*, inspired by TS Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, should hit the mark. Drew McOnie is the director and choreographer, Gary Wilmot takes the role of Gus, and Old Deuteronomy is played by Melanie La Barrie. The news that a reworking of *Cats* is closing early in New York prompted Lloyd Webber to issue a gloomy warning about the state of Broadway's finances. As long as the British weather behaves, this version should have a smoother time of it.
Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, London, to Sep 19; UK tour opens at Plymouth Theatre Royal on Oct 6

MARK SENIOR

Cats at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. Below: Carlos Acosta

Classical

Mahler's First by Heart

Richard Morrison

Mahler's tumultuous First Symphony has been turned inside-out a few times recently. A performance at Smith Square Hall this summer shifted the orchestra into the audience and vice versa. Now the Aurora Orchestra under Nicholas Collon's direction presents the work in one of its memorised performances, preceded by a "musical and dramatic exploration" of how the symphony relates to Mahler's turbulent life.
Royal Albert Hall, London, tonight and tomorrow; also live on Radio 3

Visual art

Richard Dadd: Beyond Bedlam

Laura Freeman

Richard Dadd's fairies aren't pretty and they don't twinkle. They are strange and alluring, beguiling and sinister. Dadd's life was as peculiar as his art. After murdering his father in the grip of a psychotic delusion, Dadd was committed to the criminal wing of Bedlam mental asylum, where he continued to paint his fantastical, intricate pictures. The Royal Academy's show looks beyond the madness and places the art centre stage.
Royal Academy, London, to Oct 25

Dance

Carlos Acosta: Myths and Modern Masters

Debra Craine

He may be in his fifties, but the Cuban star is still a big draw. Here's the chance to see him perform *The Moor's Pavane*, José Limón's 1949 modern dance reworking of *Othello*. Acosta will also dance in his creation *Nutcracker in Havana Suite* and Christopher Bruce's *Rooster* — music by the Rolling Stones.
Royal Opera House, London, Wed-Aug 9

Pop

Above All Else

Will Hodgkinson

An all-day music festival in the ruins of a former Cistercian monastery? Why not? Headlining is Loyle Carner, who has brought a new mood of social awareness to UK hip-hop. Elsewhere on the bill is Jordan Rakei, the mellow-voiced rising star of folk soul from New Zealand, and Kokoroko, a London jazz collective bringing in elements of funk and highlife. It should all make for a pleasant day amid the 12th-century ruins.
Kirkstall Abbey, Leeds, today

Comedy

Roundhouse Comedy Festival

Dominic Maxwell

The Edinburgh Fringe begins next week, but London's more concentrated festival starts tonight with a show headlined by Frank Skinner, hosted by Paddy Young and featuring Phil Wang, Rosie Jones and Celya AB. Also this week: Katherine Ryan, Lou Sanders, Mawaan Rizwan, Adam Buxton, Sam Campbell, Alexei Sayle, Diane Morgan and more.
Roundhouse, London, to Aug 18

Film

Spider-Man: Brand New Day

Kevin Maher

The newlyweds Tom Holland and Zendaya on peerless form is reason alone to see this latest, 38th instalment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The pair provide the flick with a beating emotional heart as Peter Parker and his former high school sweetheart MJ face the reality that true love might be, for them at least, for ever unattainable. The comic book action round them features a super-weapon and a boring new baddie. But there is emotional intensity here that occasionally reaches the heights of *Brief Encounter* and *Past Lives*.

What we learnt

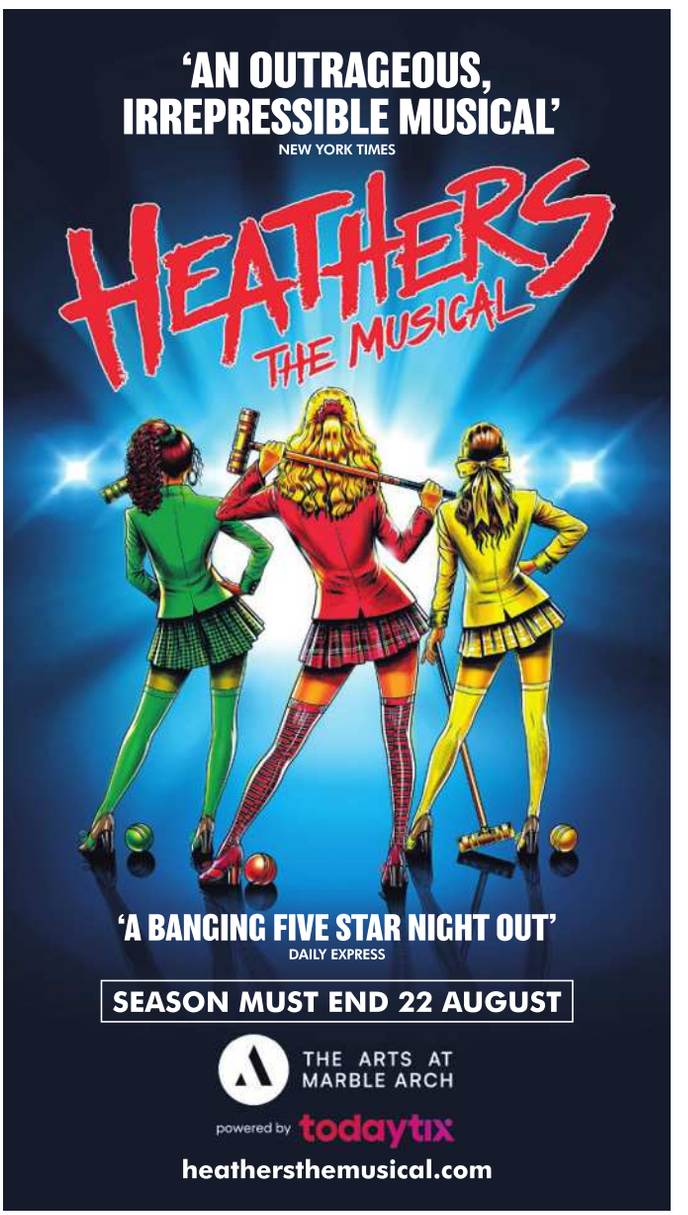
No ugly duckling

As a young man, King Harold, later of Bayeux Tapestry fame, had a reputation for being "soiled by lasciviousness". But his marriage to the brilliantly named Edith Swan-Neck was pragmatic. *Page 11*

Bananageddon approaches

Did you know you've probably only ever eaten one variety of banana? And also every single banana you've eaten is a genetic clone of all the others? The bendy, yellow Cavendish variety we know and so frequently gobble is actually one of hundreds — Fe'i bananas from Polynesia are straight and deep orange, Javanese bananas are blue and taste like custard. But the Cavendish dominates the global market because its thick skin and slow ripening process make it suited to the demands of international trade. However, it is now in peril, threatened by a fungus called Panama disease. *Page 12*

Inside today Your 7-day guide to TV and radio **Pages 19-43**

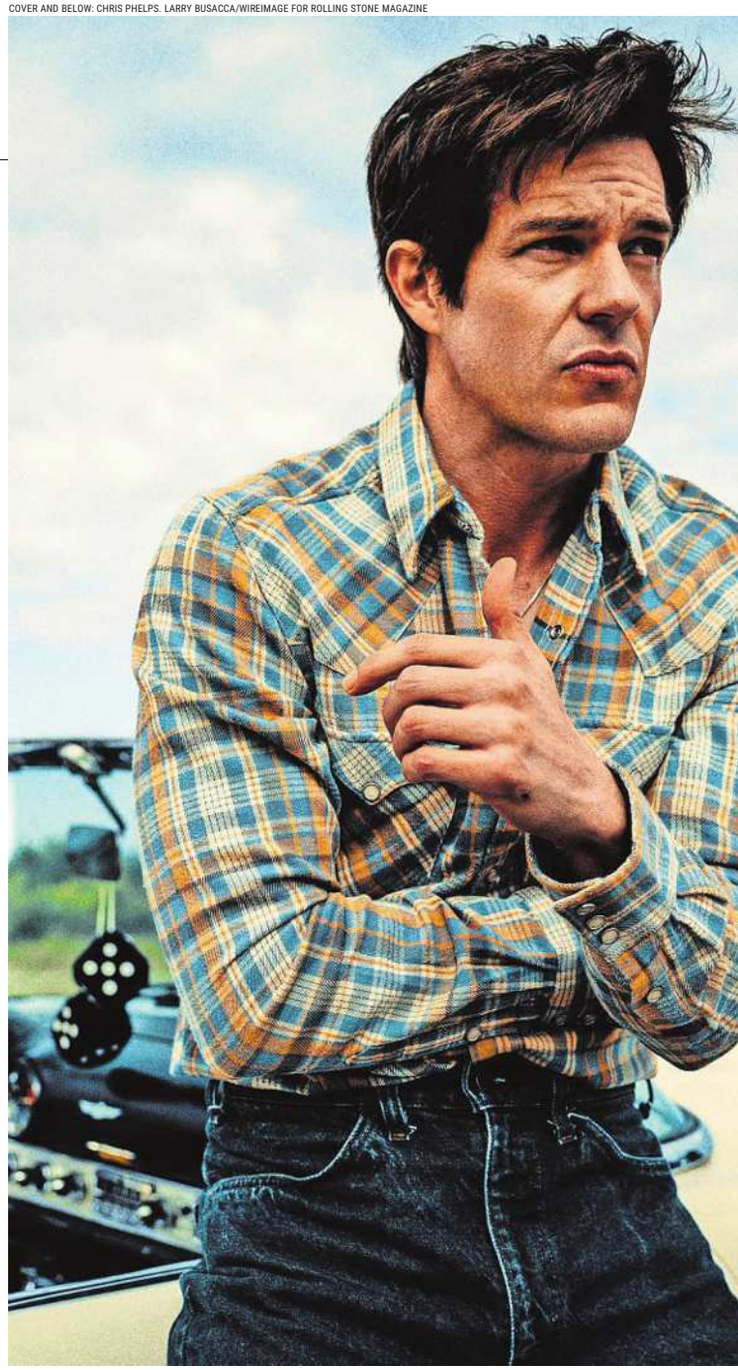


cover story

‘How much longer do I want to do this? Why am I doing it anyway?’

Brandon Flowers is the wild Las Vegas showman who fronts the Killers — but he really wants to sing country. ‘I have gravitated towards being my dad,’ he tells Will Hodgkinson

COVER AND BELOW: CHRIS PHELPS. LARRY BUSACCA/WIREIMAGE FOR ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE



If you want to understand the Killers, the Las Vegas rock band who exploded on to the scene in 2004 with *Mr Brightside*, the longest-charting single in the UK at 508 weeks and counting, you only have to meet Brandon Flowers. A natural-born outsider while growing up in the Mormon town of Nephi in Utah, the Killers’ flamboyant frontman gravitated towards the European sounds of Joy Division, Pet Shop Boys and the Smiths, the effects of which you can hear on the band’s 2004 debut album, *Hot Fuss*. But the influence of Bruce Springsteen was never too far away, hence the heartland rock of *Sam’s Town* in 2006. As Flowers says: “You’re not supposed to love Neil Tennant *and* Bruce Springsteen. But I do.”

Left to his own devices for his third solo album, *Thrasher*, he has headed for the honky-tonk. “I’ve eased into country and western,” says Flowers, a quietly spoken, polite, surprisingly shy 45-year-old. He made the album in Nashville with a crack team of country music session aces. “It was my father’s music. There would be country and western slow dances at school and at the golf course in Nephi, which was full of people who had left the Mormon church and now drank a lot; it was outlaw country. Then I’m reading Steinbeck, which leads me to Cormac McCarthy and western culture in general. Now, the older I get, the more I have gravitated towards being... I guess... my dad.”

Brandon Flowers and his wife, Tana Mundkowsky

Flowers grew up as the youngest of six children in a Mormon household (“one of my neighbours told me I was a mistake”) and spent his earliest years in Henderson, a suburban city near Las Vegas, before moving to Utah, where he was “an outlier”, he says. “The suburbs are very normal, but you’re aware of everything happening in Las Vegas and the city glows and throbs at night. For better or for worse I was attracted to that.” Spending a childhood in the glow of the bright lights just out of reach, then an adolescence as the guy in the small town who doesn’t fit in: it’s a recipe for dreams of glory.

“We feel inadequate, but we also have delusions of grandeur,” Flowers says of the average rock star’s mindset. “How did Springsteen put it? Half the people tell an artist they’re the Second Coming of the Baby Jesus, the other half tell them they’re worthless, and they believe in both. And I don’t know why, because my parents were nice to me, but I need validation. I’m just trying to please you. I want you to like me.”

Thrasher draws deeply on his childhood. *Miss America*, which refers to meeting at the carwash where Kevin Bacon filmed a scene in *Footloose*, is about one of Flowers’s four older sisters, who was stuck in a violent marriage with three kids by the age of 21.

“Peach-fuzz boys getting hard in the corner on *Mortal Kombat*,” goes a typically evocative line from *Tiger’s Blood*, which comes after the singer puts himself in the picture: “New kid in the county/ crowd-shy, hunched in the shoulders/ with gelled-up hair.” As anyone who has seen the Killers knows, Flowers is a showman of Elvis Presley-like proportions. He wasn’t always that way.

“I was eight when we left Las Vegas to go to a little town in Utah called Payson and twelve when we moved to Nephi, which is right at that awkward time. Nephi in 1993 was like 1955. The internet didn’t exist. There were no stop lights. No McDonald’s. It was a small town. And if you’re not born in a small town, you’re not in the clique.”

Sitting in a room at the Langham hotel in central London, over the road from BBC Broadcasting House, where he has just recorded a session, Flowers looks the very image of the all-American man: gym-toned body, sculpted quiff, impressive dentistry and the kind of chiselled features that make one think of Clark Kent. Or perhaps Superman. “When I came to Nephi, I had put on some weight,” he says of his 12-year-old self. “I would wear four T-shirts at once to cover up what I presumed was my too-feminine chest. Like four T-shirts is going to help you look better.”

‘Faith has been a profound part of my life. I’m drawn to Jesus Christ’

There’s a lot of sadness and guilt on *Thrasher*. A gentle, harmony-rich country rocker called *Plans* has Flowers recalling the dreams of glory he shared with his childhood friends before getting more than he bargained for and having to leave everyone else behind. Elsewhere, death and regret hang heavily.

“These are life songs, not love songs,” Flowers says. “*One of Us* is about my brother-in-law Mike, who was a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mike would come to my house to try and convert my father, which he didn’t manage to do. But he did the next best thing, which was to marry my sister. That’s kind of frowned upon in the church. You’re not meant to be checking out the girls of the houses you visit.”

That’s another unusual thing about Flowers. Unlike most people in bands, he is extremely open about his faith. “I’m a Mormon, which we don’t say any more. Now we say we’re a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” he clarifies. “I really believe it. Faith has been a profound part of my life, and I’m drawn to Jesus Christ, which is a weird thing to say out loud because it makes you sound like a fanatic or something. My mother was always a Mormon, although my father only converted when I was six. Out went the Budweisers and the cigarettes and he became a better guy.”

How about the gambling? Nevada has the seventh most Mormons of any US state, and various aunts and uncles of Flowers worked as valets and croupiers in Las Vegas. It is hard to equate a city built on the wages of sin with the Latter-day Saints’ strict interpretation of the Christian teachings.

“Las Vegas was settled by Mormons in the late 1800s, and then Bugsy Siegel

and the mafia put it on the map with the casinos in the 1940s. We don't think you're going to Hell for gambling, but it's frowned upon."

Nonetheless, it was a world Flowers wanted to be a part of. "I aspired to be a valet," he says. "I saw my cousins and uncles living off tips, supporting their entire families with those jobs, and my end goal was to work at a nice place like the Bellagio. My first job on the Strip was at Spago in Caesars Palace, bussing tables. I worked at a French brasserie, I worked at a golf course. I loved the service industry. I'm still in it, actually."

A song on the album called *Paradise* tells the story of Flowers's cousin Bobby, still working as a valet for Las Vegas resorts and casinos after 30 years, providing his relative with a *Sliding Doors* moment of what might have been. Flowers's rather more unlikely path was set after meeting a co-worker called Trevor Gagner at the golf course, who loved the same odd mix of music as him: synth pop but also Frank Sinatra.

"I was a dormant person and Trevor lit me up," Flowers says of his mentor, getting enthused at the memory. "I had never met anyone before who wanted to make music and films, and couldn't imagine doing it myself because that's what other people did. I remember Trevor explaining that *Just Can't Get Enough* by Depeche Mode is rock'n'roll on synthesizers. We started making music together, but he wanted to go to LA, I wanted to stay in Las Vegas. I met [the Killers' guitarist] Dave Keuning shortly after and the rest is history."

The Killers in 2005: Mark Stoermer, Flowers, David Keuning and Ronnie Vannucci. Below: Flowers with Bruce Springsteen at Madison Square Garden in 2022

Flowers wasn't ready for fame, describing himself as a late bloomer, physically and socially, who found doing interviews extremely difficult as the Killers exploded in the mid-2000s. "On top of that we disappeared from home, playing 250 shows for the first record, so relationships were disintegrating. But what are you gonna do? This thing is happening, it's miraculous and enticing, and you have to throw yourself at it. It wasn't until 2019 that I realised: good art is its own reward. Before then I just wanted to be on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine."

In the early years of the Killers Flowers did succumb to the temptations of the road, even if he was never going to give Keith Moon a run for his money. "I was 20 when we started the band and in the early 2000s hedonism was put on a pedestal," he says of the bad old days. "Pete Doherty was glamorised and to be an authentic artist you were meant to take part in all that. I gave it a shot, but I was never very good at it."

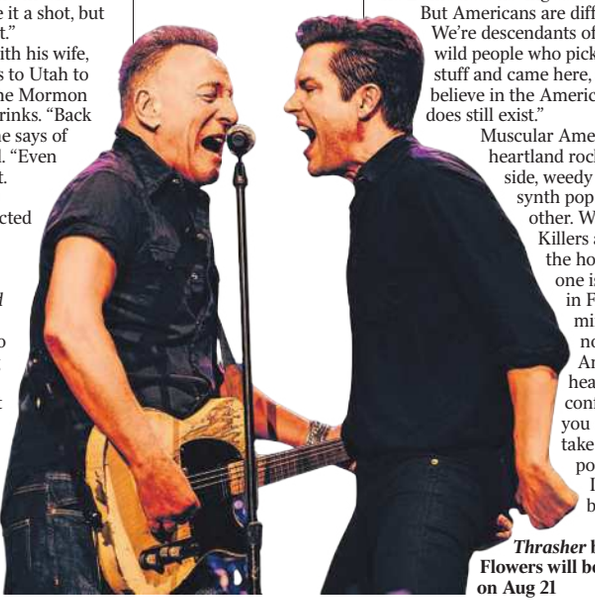
Today, having moved with his wife, Tana, and their three boys to Utah to bring up the children in the Mormon faith, Flowers no longer drinks. "Back then *everyone* was at it," he says of the pressure to get wasted. "Even the ones you didn't expect. Duran Duran were a wild bunch of guys. I was attracted to rock'n'roll excess, and Bruce Springsteen helped me shift away from that mindset. I owe *A Dustland Fairytale* to him [in 2021 Springsteen contributed to the Killers' new recording of the song, first released in 2008], which was about my mother passing away, because he helped me to see that regular people count."

Thrasher ends with a track called *An American Dream*. It describes a dream Flowers had in which he met Elvis Presley and asked him whether it was all worth it. The idea came from a conversation he had with his three boys, when he told them he was lucky to have become rich and famous and they were lucky to be the beneficiaries of his success... but it wasn't the answer to life.

"My dad goes to yard sales, where he buys frames to take home and paint. He's never had any money in his life and he's happier than I am," Flowers says, a little gloomily. "I'm really going through it right now: how much longer do I want to do this, what does it mean, why am I doing it anyway? Whenever I finish a tour, without fail I get sick. Then I think of Mick Jagger and ask myself: what keeps *him* getting up on that stage? I guess it's because there are powerful moments in a concert. How could I not want to do that?"

Flowers says he still believes in the American dream, even if it has taken a beating in the past few years. "I'm waiting for a course correction to happen," he says of the Trump era. "Where is the opposition on the left? Who is my person? Gavin Newsom, Robert De Niro and Bruce Springsteen are the only people you hear [standing up to Trump]. What's going on? Are the Democrats having secret meetings? But Americans are different. We're descendants of these wild people who picked up their stuff and came here, and I still believe in the America I love. It does still exist."

'I was attracted to rock'n'roll excess, and Bruce helped me shift from that mindset'



Muscular American heartland rock on one side, weedy European synth pop on the other. With a new Killers album on the horizon, which one is dominating in Flowers's mind? "Right now, it's the American heartland," he confirms. "Still, you can never take the synth pop out of me. It will always be there."

***Thrasher* by Brandon Flowers will be released on Aug 21**

Pop stars who went country

Ringo Starr

While John Lennon dealt with the break-up of the Beatles by entering primal scream therapy, Paul McCartney escaped to Scotland and George Harrison got spiritual, Ringo went country. The maudlin *Beaucoups of Blues* (1970) was the drummer's tribute to the Nashville sound — something he returned to with last year's charming *Look Up*.

Ray Charles

Ray Charles's album *Modern Sounds in Country and Western* was unexpected. In 1962 the musical colour barrier was more pronounced than it is now and for an R&B singer of Charles's calibre to enter a genre seen as white was revolutionary. It was also hugely successful, going to No 1 and spawning a second album of country covers six months later.

Tina Turner

Beaten down after years of abuse by her husband, Ike, Tina Turner's career was at a low ebb when she tried a new direction in 1974 with *Tina Turns the Country On!* In truth, she actually turned the singer-songwriters on with covers of favourites by Bob Dylan, James Taylor and Kris Kristofferson. Although the album bombed, it has since become a curio.

The Byrds

Having shaped up as America's answer to the Beatles, Roger McGuinn and the guys managed to lose vast swathes of their audience in 1968 with *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, but it's now viewed as a pioneering country rock classic. Their hippy fanbase was left horrified by their lurch towards redneck music, the Nashville establishment did not welcome these long-haired interlopers and the new member, Gram Parsons, who encouraged the country direction in the first place, left soon afterwards to hang out with the Rolling Stones.

Beyoncé

This is the big one: the most glamorous showbusiness, pop music professional of them all, *above*, heading down to the honky-tonk in 2024 for *Cowboy Carter*. And it worked, with the duelling banjos and frantic fiddles of *Texas Hold 'Em* making it a line-dancing standard. When asked about her country credentials, Beyoncé pointed out that she grew up going to the rodeo in Houston and had as much right to wear a stetson as anyone else from Texas.

visual art

Best way to understand an artist?

Laura Freeman has spent years trying to get under the skin of great artists — and the secret is to poke round their homes and see how they lived. Here she reveals her favourites

When I started writing for The Times and The Sunday Times a decade ago, the editor of the Culture section told me that if I was reviewing a great new cultural institution built by a starchitect at vast expense, I should always ask to see the loos — get those wrong and no grand atrium or auditorium could save you — and if I was interviewing an artist at home, I should always ask to use the downstairs loo. It would be more revealing than any interview transcript.

Show me your downstairs loo and I will show you who you are. Better yet, let me look in your kitchen junk drawer, your bathroom cabinet and the wardrobe in the second-best spare bedroom. If there's something nasty lurking in the woodshed, come on, let's have the woodshed key.

After a visit to the house of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, Virginia Woolf wrote: "One hour spent in 5 Cheyne Row will tell us more about them and their lives than we can learn from all the biographies." Yes — and no.

I'm interested in what I'd like to call the "doorsteps" theory of biography. Richard Holmes, the distinguished biographer of Shelley, Coleridge, Tennyson and others, has written of the "footsteps" theory. He argues that to know your subject you should follow in their footsteps, literally and imaginatively. "You would never catch them," he writes in *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer*, "no, you would never quite catch them. But maybe, if you were lucky you might write about the pursuit of that fleeting figure in such a way as to bring it alive in the present."

Doorstepping is also, of course, a journalists' term. It means to knock on the door of a house or to wait on the doorstep in the hope of soliciting an interview, a statement, a comment or a "no comment". I don't think an author can ambush the subject of a biography by loitering like a reporter, still less by beating on the door like a bailiff, but where a house still stands, stand on the doorstep, ring the bell and step into the past.

When I was writing my biography of Jim Ede, the creator of Kettle's Yard, a home in Cambridge filled with art, light, natural curiosities and pebbles, I interviewed dozens of former "familiars" who had visited in Ede's day. One described how Ede would open the door, take your hand to shake it, then almost draw you up the steps into the house. I was very struck by this idea of shaking hands with the past, crossing a threshold and leaving the present behind. Biography is an act of drawing up.

In a way, it's a part of what happens whenever you visit an artist's house or a National Trust property or Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields. You perform the trick of Philippa Pearce's wonderful children's story *Tom's Midnight Garden*. You push open the garden door and find that the centuries have... slipped. It's why I sometimes groan when I am sent a press release promising "contemporary interventions" and "new relevance" in a historic house. I don't want the "now". It's always now. I want the "then".

Of course, it's never so perfect an experience as it is with a children's book, where there is magic on your side. You have to be alert to what's unchanged and what's a stage set, what battles have been waged against damp and woodworm, what wallpapers have been lavishly recreated at stupendous cost.

Houses are deceptive places. Portraits of a sort, but partial and potted. The houses that are left to a grateful nation are almost always last resting places. They are where a writer or an artist died, their spectacles on the bedside table, their sunhat on a hook by the door. You never see intact the garret where they starved before they became famous or the newlywed cottage where prints hung to dry on the line next to the baby's nappies. The Hampstead studio of the brilliant, breakthrough years might have a blue plaque on the outside, but it is now a yoga loft or an Airbnb. Traces of atmosphere may remain, but not the accumulation, clutter and effects. Virginia's Woolf's essay, published in Good Housekeeping in 1932, was given the title "Great Men's Houses". Great Men's Houses tend to date from the Great Man years and, depending on how long-lived the subject, probably the Great Old Man years. We would today expand Woolf's designation to include Great Women's Houses. Her own cottage, Monk's House in East Sussex, is now owned by the National Trust. Not far away is Charleston, the Bloomsbury house that belonged to her sister the artist Vanessa Bell. A little further on is Farleys Farm, the house of the photographer Lee Miller and her husband, the author and surrealist painter Roland Penrose.

Vanessa Bell's house, Charleston. Left: her sister Virginia Woolf in the garden of her cottage Monk's House in 1926

I like it best when it's as if the artist has just stepped out for a walk

You can make a pilgrimage to the house in Hampshire where Jane Austen wrote her six novels ("Join us for Dress-up Day Weekend") and visit Elizabeth Gaskell's house in Manchester. If you ever feel you could write your masterpiece if only you had a handsome partners desk to write it on, look at Austen's tiny writing table, little larger than a washstand, and get on with applying quill to parchment or fingers to MacBook.

What I like best is an "Elvis has (just) left the building" house. A house where you can believe that the Great Man or Woman has stepped out for a walk across the Downs or along the Backs and will be back again at any moment. The Austen and Gaskell houses suffer from a sense of intermission. They are recreations — careful and sensitive and as faithful as funds allow — but they are portraits of a lady writer without quite being complete portraits of that particular lady writer. Even without the changes in ownership, it was unusual for a lady, especially a spinster like Austen, to imprint herself on a house that was in her father's or her brother's or her husband's name. One might get a room of one's own if one was lucky, but very rarely a whole house of one's own.

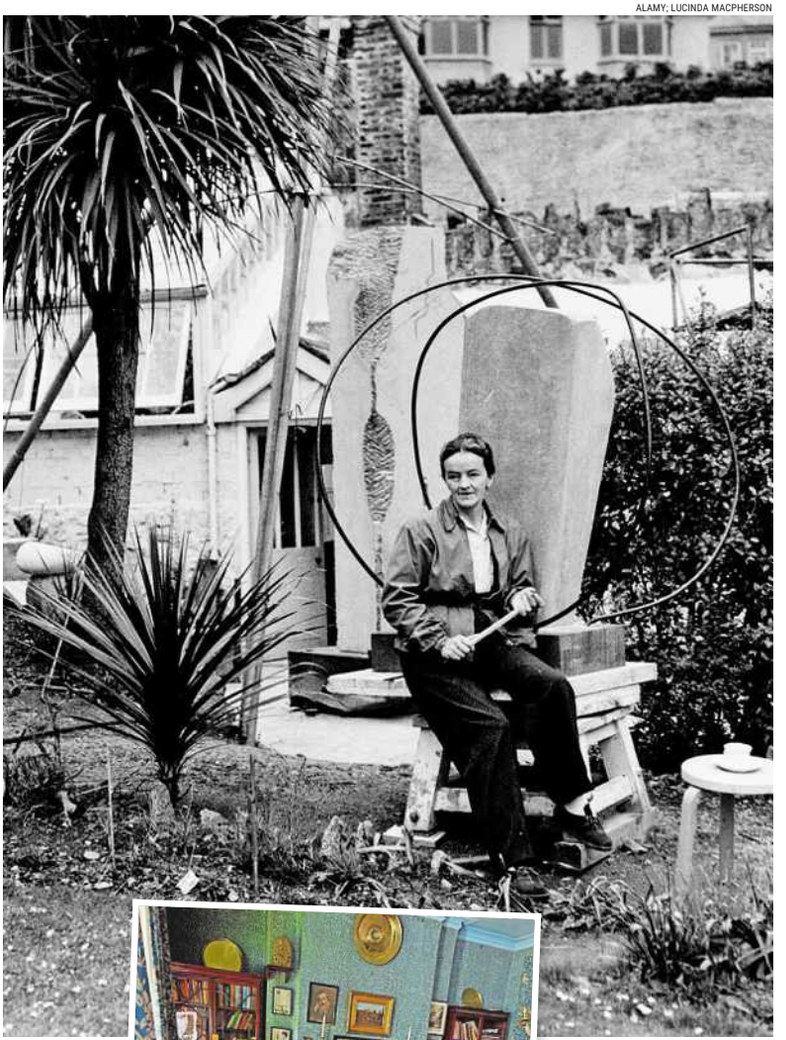
If you have a weakness for wallpaper, book yourself a tour of Emery Walker's house. Earlier this year, on a morning when the cold seemed to get into the bones of both house and visitors, I stood in the dining room of No 7 Hammersmith Terrace. Walker was an engraver, typographer and printer who was closely involved with the Arts and Crafts movement. He was also a friend of William Morris, who lived along the river at Kelmscott House. The dining room at Emery Walker's House is hung with a colourway of Morris's willow unknown anywhere else. Hammersmith Terrace was built in the mid-1760s and Walker and his family lived in the house from 1903 to 1933.

It was the first time I had really thought about what it would have been like to live in a house without central heating, with the damp coming off the Thames and the fog clouding the windows. You needed those lined curtains over not just the windows but also the doors. Visitors to Kettle's Yard remembered the warmth of Ede's welcome but also wearing their coats and scarves indoors.

No historic house is exactly as its

Go through their kitchen drawers

ALAMY; LUCINDA MACPHERSON



From top: Barbara Hepworth in her garden studio in St Ives, Cornwall in 1952; the dining room at Emery Walker's House

owner left it. Near enough, in some cases, but there is always some artifice, some fiction at play. Part of the fun is spotting the transgressions, the tidyings up (where are the dentures on the nightstand?) and the various tricks of the props department.

I'm not a great one for ghosts, at least not of the clanking-chains, Marley-was-dead variety. But when it comes to houses, I'm susceptible to the idea of hauntings, mostly of the gentle sort, sometimes more malign. I've certainly once or twice slept in a house where I've left the corridor lights on.

Emery Walker would have known that if you pressed an un-inked printing block on to a sheet of paper it would still leave an impression. When you visit a historic house, I think that's what you're looking for: not the stark black-and-white of a well-inked print, but the trace, the outline, the indentation on the page. I've felt it a couple of times lately. At Hoglands, the house of Henry and Irina Moore, part of the Henry Moore Studios and Gardens in Hertfordshire, and at Farleys Farm, where I half-expected to round a hedge and find Lee Miller with a trug of asparagus hooked over one arm.

I still feel it on visits to Kettle's Yard. In attempting to get under the skin of a subject, biographers often find that their subject has got under theirs. Long after you've delivered the manuscript, seen the book into hardback, even into paperback, you're still trying to catch your quarry. Still hoping that the next time you ring the doorbell, the great man himself will answer.

This is an extract from a speech given to the Walpole Society at the Warburg Institute to mark the announcement of the longlist for the Berger prize for art history. *Ways of Life: Jim Ede and the Kettle's Yard Artists* by Laura Freeman is published by Jonathan Cape

Eight artists' houses to visit

Emery Walker's House, London

Step through the doors of Emery Walker's house and be transported to the heyday of the Arts and Crafts movement. Find William Morris's willow, bird and borage patterns in the dining room and his tulips, lilies and wallflowers in the upstairs drawing room. Ceramics enthusiasts will delight in the pots and bowls of Alfred and Louise Powell and in the Spode teapot that once belonged to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The house also — not that I'm obsessed or anything — has a superb loo with a view over the Thames.

Kettle's Yard, Cambridge

Kettle's Yard, *right*, is more than a house. The word people often use is "sanctuary". It feels like coming home — if home were ravishingly simple and serene. Beaten-up antiques live happily with sculptures by Constantin Brancusi and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Flowers from the garden are given equal billing with works by Ben Nicholson and Joan Miró. A lemon on a platter is as cherished as a Barbara Hepworth. Bring a book, sink into a chair, stay for the afternoon.

575 Wandsworth Road, London

Say "National Trust house" and you picture a Palladian mansion with sweeping parkland. No 575 Wandsworth Road is a tiny terrace with jaw-dropping interiors. Periodically, I seize someone by the lapels and say: "Go!" This was the house of the Kenyan-born poet, novelist and civil servant Khadambi Asalache. Over 19 years he embellished every room of the house with fretwork patterns hand-carved from reclaimed doors and floorboards. The detail is wonderfully delicate — spot the paper-dolls concertina of ballerinas above the fireplace — and the total effect astonishing.

Charleston, East Sussex

Even the most straitlaced visitor to Charleston cannot help but come over bohemian. Wouldn't it be wonderful to live and love as the Bloomsbury set did? Painting, writing, gardening, taking deckchairs out into the garden to debate literature and economics among the hollyhocks? It's not uncommon to get back home and start repainting the TV room in Charleston style — before repenting soon after.

Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, St Ives, Cornwall

When others used to bang on about the light in St Ives, I would think: "Yes, yes, light is light." And then I went to St Ives and became one of the bangers-on. The light, the atmosphere, the sense of sky and space in the Barbara Hepworth studios and sculpture garden is something else again.

Farleys Farm, Sussex

Farleys Farm, home of the photographer Lee Miller and the artist Roland Penrose, still has the feel of a family home and a farm. The conventional exterior conceals a wonderfully strange interior filled with surrealist paintings, found objects and cabinets of curiosity. A piece of old English chinaware such as a cow-head butter dish takes on a strange new character when set beside the dream-like visions of the surrealists. Victorian sweet jars jostle for space with Mexican folk art, Indian bronzes and an African mud wasp's nest. Don't miss the Picasso tile above Miller's Aga.

Hoglands, Henry Moore Studios and Gardens, Perry Green, Hertfordshire

Perhaps the biggest surprise at Hoglands, the home of the sculptor Henry Moore, is the pair of china dogs in the little back sitting room. Could Moore, Mr Modernism, maker of broken bodies, really have been a fan of Staffordshire spaniels? It turns out Moore and his wife, Irina, were great ones for the local antiques circuit. It's just one of many surprises.

The Charles Rennie Mackintosh House, Glasgow

Wipe your feet as you arrive in the Mackintosh House, *left*, an immaculate reassembly of the Glasgow home of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife, the artist Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh. You might never be able to live somewhere as austerely beautiful — Edward Lutyens described the interiors of 6 Florentine Terrace as "all very elaborately simple" — but it's an inspiring place to visit. Stop for tea at the Mackintosh Tearooms and mourn the damage to the Mackintosh Building at the Glasgow School of Art. If you're nearer Northampton, put 78 Derngate, a restored Mackintosh house, on your list.

books

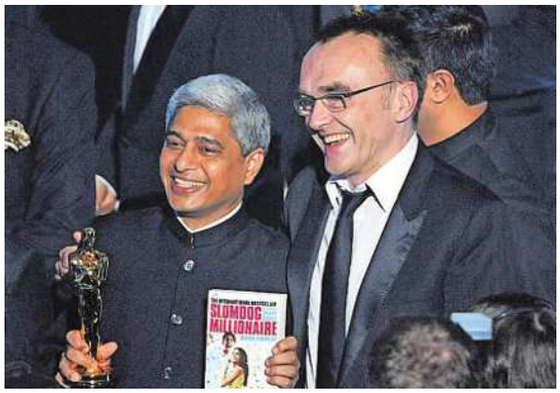
Slumdog wouldn't happen today. It would be 'cultural appropriation'

Vikas Swarup, the Indian author of the novel that became the Oscar-winning film, tells Sathnam Sanghera why a wealthy diplomat writing about poverty would now cause a 'brouhaha'

Slumdog Millionaire could not have garnered much more in the way of praise in the West: it won eight Academy awards in 2009, including for best picture. But in India it went down like a cold, soggy samosa. There were accusations that it peddled "poverty porn" and focused on the squalor of India while ignoring its ever-increasing economic, technological and geopolitical prowess. Some activists even filed lawsuits attempting to ban the film.

After 17 years I struggle to understand how Vikas Swarup, whose novel *Q&A* spawned Danny Boyle's film, got away with it, given that at the time he was a diplomat serving in London as a political counsellor, paid in part to present India in the best possible light. "One reason is the fact that the civil service rules are remarkably enlightened," explains the recently retired 65-year-old, speaking from his air-conditioned study in Delhi, where he begins writing at five every morning. "Can you believe it, when I was in service you didn't require the government's permission? But, yes, some people did say, as a diplomat, how can you paint India in a negative light? And I say, look, this book is not a documentary. The slums are merely a backdrop to a compelling human story of courage and determination. So that is something to celebrate."

If anything, Swarup's new book, *The Girl with the Seven Lives*, which he describes as "*Slumdog* meets *Arabian Nights*", has even harsher things to say about the subcontinent. Its 25-year-old protagonist, Devi, navigates degrading poverty, human trafficking, police corruption, health inequality, scam culture, institutional rape and con artists masquerading as gurus. And I find it even harder to understand how he is getting away with it, because he was until recently official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, accompanying Prime Minister Modi on about 40 trips and conducting press conferences with up to 70 journalists once a week. From a distance, it's the Indian equivalent of Alastair Campbell moonlighting as John Pilger during the Blair years.



Vikas Swarup and the director Danny Boyle at the Oscars in 2009. Below: Swarup today. Right: Dev Patel and Freida Pinto in the film Slumdog Millionaire

He has an explanation: "The essence of democracy is that we are not perfect, [but] that there is accountability," he says. "All my books eventually celebrate that." But it's especially astonishing that he has developed a sideline in penning "social thrillers" when he has had no experience of poverty and didn't visit a slum until after *Q&A* was published.

He grew up middle class and is speaking to me from a sprawling, custom-built home in Greater Noida, an affluent enclave insulated from the mayhem of New Delhi.

He doubles down on this approach in his new book with some metafiction: at one point Devi is taken up by a hotshot female banker who wants to use her to research poverty for a book/film project. "Initially I thought whether I should mention *Slumdog*, but concluded that would be too much. But it's all about appropriation. Can somebody from a privileged background appropriate a character belonging to the disadvantaged community or not? I personally believe that you can. All literature is appropriation in a sense."

He adds that he can understand poverty by looking round. From his cook, cleaner and gardener, from newspaper headlines, "the people you see on the road etc". I admire his dedication to the freedom of thought: there should be no limits to where writers can go. But I can't imagine a western writer getting away with it. Nor can I imagine a male writer in Britain getting away with writing heavily commercial fiction, as he has done several times, from the perspective of a woman, this time one who is threatened with sexual violence.

Although as we continue to talk I begin to wonder whether he manages it because he is such a good diplomat: he is so smooth. He begins our conversation by talking intelligently about two of my books, and ends it with an invitation to stay at his home. Also, perhaps part of his creative freedom lies in him being Indian. Much of the upset about *Slumdog* was rooted in the director being British and seemingly making harsh assumptions about India. And while Swarup may have grown up in Allahabad reading what lots of us grew up reading in Britain, he writes for an Indian audience.

"For me the primary reader is Indian. If you start writing a global novel for the world, then you will bleach it of all particularity and it will become an absolutely useless novel. I don't think I write for a foreign audience at all."

Swarup has had to watch *Slumdog* 26 times in the course of diplomatic postings in Turkey, US, Ethiopia, South Africa, Japan and Canada. He echoes Boyle's recent remarks that the film wouldn't be made now. "It would be called cultural appropriation. I think the world has changed fundamentally since the time the movie came out and the book came out because of social media. Now we are living in what I call the outrage economy. There would be much more brouhaha about the book."

We discuss some of the themes in the new thriller, in which the protagonist is abducted by a masked gunman. He threatens to kill her unless she confesses to a series of crimes, which take place at different times of her life. Not least, there is the seemingly unending corruption of the Indian police. Does he trust them personally?

"Look, that's the common perception of the police, but to be fair to myself, in my third book there is an actual honest cop. But in this book I am looking at the world through the eyes of a poor person. And there is no way in hell that a poor person can have a benign view of the police."

At one point Devi finds herself in a correctional facility for young girls where they face the daily threat of rape, a storyline inspired by revelations about Muzaffarpur shelter home in Bihar, which became the centre of a national scandal after a social audit exposed systemic abuse of vulnerable girls. Some people say India has a problem with a culture of rape, I remark.

"Certainly it's a problem in the north. I think you don't have that much of a problem in the south. Delhi has a reputation now as being unsafe for women. People advise single women not to venture out at night."

In the face of such threats and others, many characters in the novel want to leave India. Is the desire to emigrate as

ALAMY

‘I’m hearing horror stories about London. Delhi is much safer’

***The Girl with the Seven Lives* by Vikas Swarup (Apollo £20) is published on Aug 18. Buy it from timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935**

strong as it used to be, even as India becomes a superpower? “Yes they want to leave, there is no doubt about it. For the rich and the upper crust, it’s a very comfortable life in India. But for the poor and the lower middle class, they feel they will have a better life abroad.”

He tells me about a taxi driver he met in Canada who used to be professor in the Punjab, but was earning double abroad. Which countries do Indians want to emigrate to? “I would say number one is America. Number two is definitely Britain. I think London still has a magnetic pull. Number three would be Canada. Number four would be Australia. And what is the common thread? They’re all English-speaking.”

They were all also formerly part of the British Empire, of course. Officially, the Indian government is keen on decolonisation. Is what happened under the British still a source of anger? “Look, you and I would not be having this conversation in the language in which we are speaking if it had not been for the empire. As you have written, empire had its good points and its bad points. On balance I think certainly the empire did more bad than it did good. In the sense of the psychological scars. It will take one more generation before we are able to completely overcome that legacy.”

In many ways, Swarup’s life is a legacy of this history. As well as writing in English, he has two sons, Adit, 34, and Varun, 30, who spent their formative years at the Garden Suburb School in Golders Green, London, where they absorbed British culture to such a degree that they supported the English cricket team. They are now in North America. Having lived in so many places, is there anywhere Swarup considered retiring to that wasn’t India? “For me it was never an option. At the end of the day you are treated as a proper citizen only in your own country. You can change the colour of your passport, but you cannot change the colour of your skin.”

Did it strike him that Britain had a problem with racism? “Of course it has racism.” Does he feel safer in Delhi than in London? “Yeah, London I’m hearing horror stories. I think India is much safer. Honestly. I mean, in Delhi nobody’s going to snatch your jewellery or your purse.” He adds that for his wife “London is the greatest city on the planet” and he has fond memories of it because it was where he wrote *Q&A* in just two and a half months. But “I did not like London for the simple reason I thought the weather is awful. I mean, it’s grey 75 per cent of the time, it can rain at a drop of a hat.”

I check the weather forecast on my phone, and, for once, it is sunny in London and raining in Delhi. As we wrap up, Swarup tells me he has plans to write a non-fiction book about how social media is destroying the world. And that negotiations are in full flow for the screen adaptation of *The Girl with the Seven Lives* with an Indian producer, with the intention of developing it as a web series. *Slumdog*, he says, taught him that “once a book is adapted, you have to let go. The novel is the novel. The film is the film. They are siblings, not twins. My hope is that it preserves what lies at the heart of the novel. Despite the darkness it confronts, it is a story about resilience.

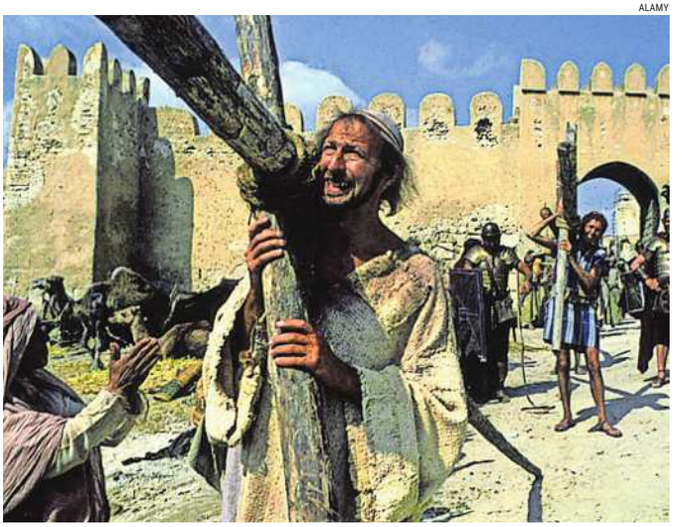
“*Slumdog* was a love story, a fairytale, and above all a celebration of the triumph of the human spirit against overwhelming odds. Similarly, Devi’s journey is not defined by what happens to her, but by her refusal to be defeated by it.”

my culture fix

Richard Dawkins

The scientist and author on Billy Bunter, Wodehouse and Life of Brian

ALAMY



Graham Chapman in Monty Python’s Life of Brian. Below: Hiromi

My favourite author

Toss-up between PG Wodehouse and Evelyn Waugh, both consummate masters of English. How about this [from Wodehouse] for splendid hyperbole? “Tailors would measure him just for the exercise.” Or this for economy of writing? Evelyn Waugh is introducing a trio of supernormally ghastly evacuee children. The eldest, Doris, is vividly described. Then, “Micky, her junior by the length of a rather stiff sentence for housebreaking, was... a child of few words and those, for the most part, foul.”

The book I’m reading

Stolen Focus by that excellent journalist Johann Hari. A warning of the pernicious effects of social media on our attention span.

The book I wish I had written

Dark Universe by Daniel Galouye. The best science fiction makes you think and this haunting novel does it in spades. A human society living underground in complete darkness — for reasons we gradually guess — has a religion based on a mythology of Light.

The book I couldn’t finish

Couldn’t? There are so many books I didn’t finish.

My favourite film

I love old British comedies like *The Ladykillers* — the genuine Alec Guinness article, not the American plagiarism. *Two-Way Stretch* is another superb one with a lovely performance by Lionel Jeffries as a martinet chief prison warder: “Silence when you’re talking to me.” But nothing quite competes with *Monty Python’s Life of Brian*.

My favourite play

Noises Off by Michael Frayn. What a gloriously witty man he is. His novels such as *The Tin Men* and *Towards the End of the Morning* are wonderful satires. And his play *Copenhagen* is nothing short of profound.

The box set that I’m hooked on

Chance in a Million. Simon Callow and Brenda Blethyn, *right*, are delightful in this series. Worth rewatching every couple of years.

My favourite TV series

Wodehouse Playhouse. Mostly taken from the Mulliner stories, they are true to the original, unlike some other Wodehouse dramatisations whose scriptwriters vainly think they can do better. Pauline Collins and John Alderton play different characters in each story, and they are a joint masterclass in how to act.

My favourite piece of music

Schubert’s Quintet in C major, especially the slow movement.

The last film that made me cry

Bedazzled, with Dudley Moore, Peter Cook and the wonderful Eleanor Bron made me cry with laughter. Again the real thing, not the American rip-off.

The lyric I wish I’d written

Tom Lehrer’s *The Wild West Is Where I Want to Be*. Or any of Lehrer’s witty rhymes, all as unlyrical as can be imagined.

The poem that saved me

WB Yeats’s *To His Heart, Bidding It Have No Fear*.

The instrument I play

I learnt the clarinet at school, and now play the electronic wind instrument. It’s fingered like any woodwind instrument, but the sound that emerges is electronically synthesized, so can be anything from violin to tuba.

The instrument I wish I’d learnt

Piano. Actually I did learn the piano, but was plagued by a good ear and a lazy constitution so I never put in the work.

The music that cheers me up

Hiromi, the utterly amazing Japanese piano virtuoso.

If I could own one painting it would be

A vivid and cheerful Hockney landscape.

The place I feel happiest

The 21st century.

My guiltiest cultural pleasure

Revisiting books of my childhood such as Billy Bunter and *Just William*.

I’m having a fantasy dinner party. I’ll invite these artists and authors

This usually means which historical figures would you want to meet: Aristotle, Jesus, Shakespeare, Newton, Darwin. But I would be so overawed to meet them, and they would be so overawed by modernity, it wouldn’t be a very jolly occasion. For a dinner party, you want funny, clever people who raise the game of their shy and less naturally witty host. I’d have Alexander McCall Smith, Dan Dennett, Peter Sellers, David Attenborough, Desmond Morris, Peter Medawar and all four stars of *Beyond the Fringe*.

I wasted an evening watching

School for Scoundrels, with Alastair Sim well cast as Stephen Potter, should have been good, but was so badly done.

The film I walked out of

The scriptwriter of Channel 4’s dramatisation of *Sword of Honour* thought he could do better than Evelyn Waugh. Obviously he couldn’t. I watched this travesty with genuine sadness.

Overrated

Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*.

Underrated

Red Strangers by Elspeth Huxley. A grand, sweeping epic of a novel, it rivals the best of John Steinbeck, yet is largely unknown. She entices the reader into the world of the Kikuyu so completely that when the British turn up we see them as strange aliens.

***The Selfish Gene: 50th Anniversary Edition* by Richard Dawkins (OUP £12.99) is out now. Order from timesbookshop.co.uk or 020 3176 2935. *Tales from Life: A Modern Bestiary* is published by Head of Zeus on Nov 5**

opera

Ring fever! Why we can't get enough of Wagner's epic

Musicians, singers and artists explain their passion for the Ring cycle, 150 years after its premiere

One of the great moments in cultural history took place 150 years ago in an obscure town in Bavaria. Well, a "moment" that took four days and included about 15 hours of music. This was the launch of the first Bayreuth Festival and the premiere of Richard Wagner's tetralogy of operas, collectively known as the *Ring* cycle.

Within a few years the world's great opera houses embarked on their own productions of the *Ring*. The Royal Opera is midway through a new cycle — *Götterdämmerung*, the last part, comes in 2027 — and full cycles come to the Paris Opera in the autumn of this year.

Controversially, Bayreuth has marked the anniversary not with a new production, but a version of the cycle in which the singers are surrounded by AI-guided projections based on images and data culled from previous Bayreuth productions.

But does the *Ring* need to be experienced in the flesh? This week Apple Music Classical launches its own *Ring* project, a moment-by-moment listening guide intended to run alongside Georg Solti's landmark 1965 recording. As you listen you can scroll through about 45,000 words of commentary by their Wagnerian experts — people holding your hand, essentially. And if even that sounds a bit daunting, there are four highlights playlists inspired by different themes.

We asked some prominent Wagner lovers — from celebrities to conductors — to try to name their favourite moments of the cycle.

Neil Fisher

Stephen Fry

Actor, writer and presenter of Wagner and Me (BBC, 2011)

I shan't be embarrassed to suggest a passage that always makes the compilations discs. In the classical music recording industry Wagner highlights are called, thanks to a remark made by the music critic Donald Tovey, "raw bleeding chunks". No, I haven't selected the *Ride of the Valkyries*, stirring as it is. Nor Siegfried's Death March, another favourite for those compilations. I've chosen what is known as the *Magic Fire Music*, which ends the second work of the *Ring* cycle, *Die Walküre*. Wotan must punish his beloved favourite daughter, Brünnhilde, for disobedience. He summons the fire god Loge (Loki to Marvel fans) and puts her to sleep (unmistakable sighing strings), Loge surrounds her with a circle of fire (leaping, flickering musical flames) and the Siegfried theme thrillingly grows to suggest the hero who will awaken her in the next drama to come in the cycle. And the curtain falls.

Lise Davidsen

The acclaimed soprano sings her first Ring opera, Die Walküre, in Salzburg, Austria, next year

At the moment I'm studying Brünnhilde, so my current favourite part of the *Ring* is a single line from Act III of *Die Walküre* in which she explains she disobeyed Wotan's order to kill the hero Siegmund because she was fulfilling Wotan's true inner desire: "*Der diese Liebe mir ins Herz gehaucht, dem Willen, der dem Wälsung mich gesellt, ihm innig vertraut, trotz' ich deinem Gebot.*" It points towards everything that's still to come. I love it because it's the moment Brünnhilde lays down her armour — not only physically, but emotionally. She says: "It was love that made me do this." She is changed in that moment and that's a reminder that we can be changed.

Michael Gove

Editor of The Spectator

Most infatuations that begin in teenage bedrooms end quickly and leave only embarrassment. Mine might be shameful in some eyes, but it's lasted all my life. I fell in love with Wagner when I heard the first, haunting chords of *Das Rheingold* on the tinny reception of the black-and-white telly in my room at home in Aberdeen in the Eighties. I was gripped. It was the Patrice Chéreau production from Bayreuth conducted by Pierre Boulez — deeply controversial at the time, considered canonical now. I had no idea about any of that. All I knew was that music was seducing me. I have since sat in that Bayreuth opera house and seen the *Ring* all through. Twice. In German and without surtitles. And every moment has been an escape from this world into an all-encompassing vision of what it is to love, lose, struggle and surrender.

ALAMY

Leah-Marian Jones, Gillian Webster and Judith Howarth as the Rhinemaidens in the Royal Opera's 1994 production of Das Rheingold. Below: Kiri Te Kanawa, Stephen Fry and Joanna Lumley

Kiri Te Kanawa

Now retired, the soprano mentors singers through the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

Although my performances of Wagner were restricted to singing one of the flower maidens in *Parsifal* at Covent Garden and then later singing the Woodbird for Bernard Haitink's recording of the *Ring*, only Mozart and Richard Strauss beat my love for Wagner. If I had to choose a single piece from the *Ring* cycle it would have to be Siegfried's Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung*. In fact, I love it so much I want to have it played at my own funeral. It's music that has a visceral power that instantly lifts you into another realm.

Joanna Lumley

The actress, married to the conductor Stephen Barlow, is a supporter of Grange Park Opera, whose Ring continues in 2027

It does have to be the end of *Die Walküre*, when Wotan says farewell to Brünnhilde. I find it one of the most heart-stopping scenes in all opera. Here is a father forced to part from the daughter he adores. There is an overwhelming sense that the worst possible thing is happening, and yet hope survives.

Brindley Sherratt

The bass has sung the roles of Fafner and Hunding in the Ring

Surprising myself, I've picked a section where there is no singing. The first four minutes of *Das Rheingold* are, to me, one of the greatest moments in opera. The imperceptible double basses playing a low E flat, making the audience wonder if the music has actually begun. It's a call to buckle on your shoes and prepare for an operatic adventure of a lifetime. It's also a galvanising moment for the singers, straining to hear the deep thrum in our dressing rooms.

Simone Young

In 2024 Young became the first woman and the first Australian to conduct the complete Ring at Bayreuth

I will take you into the last hour of this 14-hour, 30-minute marathon to Siegfried's Funeral March. Powerful, tragic, emotional, pulsating, triumphant — all the adjectives I would choose for the whole *Ring*. The climax is a few staggering bars in C major, when the orchestra gives its all; it is electrifying. Wagner weaves the motives from Siegfried's life, including the melody when Brünnhilde announces he will be the greatest hero of all time, and intertwines it with the rhythms of the end of Valhalla, which is approaching.

Tom Holland

The Rest Is History presenter recorded a special Wagner episode in 2025

Sorry, but nothing in the *Ring* cycle beats the end of *Die Walküre*. The great drama of gods and cosmic doom becomes achingly personal. Wagner's command of his material has never seemed more total and the potency of opera never more movingly displayed.

Apple Music Classical's Listening Guide to Wagner's Ring is available now

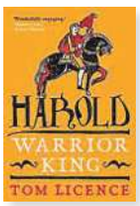
books

TIMES Bookshop
To order any of the books reviewed go to *timesbookshop.co.uk* or call 020 3176 2935.
Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for **Times+** members

Harold — more than meets the eye

Book of the week

The last Anglo-Saxon king was a womaniser and schemer, not just Norman arrow fodder. By Katherine Harvey



Harold
Warrior King
by Tom Licence
Yale £25 pp416

BAYEUX TAPESTRY 11TH CENTURY ©BAYEUX TAPESTRY MUSEUM

In one of the best-known panels from the Bayeux Tapestry, King Harold Godwinson is fatally wounded when an arrow hits him in the eye. To the Victorians, this iconic image proved that the last Anglo-Saxon king was a martyr, willing to die so that his people could be reborn through the Norman Conquest. Even now, the popular appeal of this defiant hero is sufficiently strong to guarantee big crowds at the British Museum this autumn.

So it is unfortunate that the scene is a myth — and not just because, rather than falling victim to an arrow (which seems to have been added by 19th-century restorers), Harold was probably hacked to death. According to Tom Licence, a professor of medieval history and literature at the University of East Anglia and the author of a well-received biography of Edward the Confessor, the king was a rather more complicated figure than his legend suggests.

Licence's scholarly approach to Harold's eventful life means that this timely book is very much not a quick primer to read before a trip to see the tapestry. But his exhaustive analysis offers new insights into the life and times of this much-mythologised monarch, beginning with his upbringing as the second son of one of 11th-century England's most powerful men.

A master of political duplicity, his father, Earl Godwin, was a favourite of King Cnut. After Cnut's death, Godwin acted as kingmaker for Edward the Confessor, who ruled from 1042 to 1066. The grateful new monarch repaid his support by marrying Godwin's daughter Edith of Wessex, and granting earldoms to two of his sons.

As a young man, Harold combined administrative competence with military flair — which made him a significant asset to Edward the Confessor, on whose behalf he campaigned extensively in Wales. Despite his saintly reputation, the king could be surprisingly hawkish, gleefully receiving the severed head of the Welsh ruler Rhys ap Rhydderch and frequently ordering political assassinations at his Christmas courts.

The two men shared an interest in religious patronage, with Harold's many gifts to Waltham Abbey including a lifesize crucifix and at least eight large gospel books. In one of them he is depicted as a near-naked supplicant before the crucified Christ. But Harold was nevertheless capable of behaviour that scandalised his contemporaries, such as having his unbaptised infant son buried in Canterbury Cathedral and demanding that his warrior-chaplain Leofgar be appointed Bishop of Hereford.

His supposed romance with the beautiful Edith Swan-Neck, a wealthy landowner, was actually a pragmatic union, motivated largely by his desire to get his hands on her inheritance. It did not stop him gaining a reputation as "a man soiled by lasciviousness" or contracting a politically advantageous second marriage with a Welsh noblewoman. Indeed, Licence's account of Harold's pre-1066 career makes clear that he would do whatever it took to stay afloat in a brutal world where even an earl could easily lose everything. In 1051, when Godwin's position as King Edward's right-hand man was challenged by Robert of Jumièges (who, having been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, encouraged Edward to set aside the childless Edith of Wessex), Harold joined his father's rebellion.

But after a brief period of exile (which Harold spent in Ireland, before engaging in a spot of piracy in the West Country), the family were soon back in England, stronger than ever. And, after Godwin's death, Harold took an equally forceful approach to his own enemies — including his brother Tostig, with whom he had a turbulent relationship.

King Harold is wounded in a detail from the Bayeux Tapestry and, below, the monarch crowns himself

Rather than falling victim to an arrow, Harold was probably hacked to death

Although claims that Tostig massacred Harold's servants and hid their remains in barrels of beer sitting ready for a royal feast are almost certainly nonsense, he did encourage a Welsh attack on his brother's new hunting lodge. By 1065, when Tostig's harsh rule in Northumbria prompted a rebellion in the north, fraternal relations were so bad that Harold was happy to exploit the situation to get his rival sent into exile.

With Tostig gone, Harold was well placed to seize the throne when Edward died in January 1066, although Licence is justifiably sceptical about Harold's claim that, having raised his great-nephew Edgar Aetheling as his heir, the dying king abruptly changed his mind in Harold's favour. The speed with which the new king was crowned, only hours after the old one was buried, certainly suggests that Harold was anticipating dissent.

Sure enough, Harold soon discovered that although it was relatively easy for the second most powerful man in England to seize the throne, it was much harder for him to keep it. Almost immediately, he went north to suppress a rebellion in York. As soon as that threat was dealt with, it became clear that the Norwegian king Harald Hardrada (supported by Tostig) and William, Duke of Normandy, were preparing to invade.

Licence's detailed analysis of Harold's nine-month reign, including the decisive battles of Stamford Bridge (which he won) and Hastings (which he lost), features some radical reinterpretations of these familiar events.

His suggestion that, rather than marching hastily to Hastings, Harold and his troops sailed south and arrived well rested, has already caused controversy among historians.

Given that the surviving sources often fail to answer even the most basic questions about Harold and his world, this and other theories are, as Licence himself acknowledges, based on "educated guesswork". Despite careful scrutiny of every scrap of evidence, it is striking how little we know about Harold, with even the fate of his mutilated corpse uncertain.

One chronicler claimed that William opted for a hasty clifftop burial, while another reported that (having been retrieved from the battlefield by Edith Swan-Neck) Harold's body was handed over to Waltham Abbey. By the 12th century, some even claimed that Harold had fled the battlefield and lived out his days as a hermit near Chester, revealing his true identity only on his deathbed. It's a mystery that may never be solved — unless, of course, he turns up under a car park.

books

Bananageddon! Our favourite fruit is dying out

Panama disease will wipe out the classic banana — unless the EU bends its anti-GM rules. By Ben Cooke

Go into any supermarket and you'll find several varieties of apples and oranges but only one variety of banana. It probably seems odd to think of it as a variety at all. It's just a banana — as bendy and yellow as every other one you've seen.

It might come as a surprise, then, to hear that the banana in your local shop is just one of hundreds of varieties, not all of which look like they belong in the palm of a cartoon monkey. Fe'i bananas, found in Polynesia, are straight and deep orange. On the island of Java bananas are blue and taste, apparently, of custard.

In a culture gripped by food fads, transfixed by macha lattes one month and Dubai chocolate the next, it's curious that our TikTok feeds have not yet been inundated with orange and blue bananas. But it's also entirely explicable. Cavendish bananas — the variety with which we are familiar — are thick-skinned and slow-ripening, uniquely suited to the demands of international trade. And consumers love them because, unlike most varieties, they are not studded with indigestible seeds.

This combination of qualities has made the Cavendish the world's favourite fruit, the object of a £26 billion industry spanning plantations across South America, Africa and Asia. Yet its seedlessness is also why the Cavendish is on the verge of disappearing from our supermarkets. "Bananageddon", scientists fear, is nigh.

Lacking seeds, Cavendish plants can reproduce only by cloning themselves, planting their suckers in the ground to sprout new saplings. Lacking any genetic diversity, each and every Cavendish plant is equally susceptible to a fungus known as Panama disease, which is steadily eating its way through the world's plantations. Discovered in Australia in the late 1800s, Panama disease has hitched a lift from humans, spreading through Asia and Africa in the 2010s and arriving in South America in 2019. It has even made it to the Eden Project.

Despite dousing their facilities in fungicide, banana growers know the game is up for the Cavendish. It is widely accepted in the industry that it will

The Cavendish variety will likely disappear from shelves in the next decade or two

disappear from shelves in the next decade or two. Hence the title of James Dale's book *The Future of Bananas*. It is clear the Cavendish has no future, but it is also clear that there is a prize in the billions awaiting whoever can find — or genetically engineer — the banana to replace it.

Part of Melville House's eclectic series of volumes on the future of, among other things, energy, Wales, the novel and the self, Dale's book is a tour d'horizon of the efforts underway to replace the Cavendish. As Dale sees it, this is not an irresolvable problem. He thinks we should be able to find a substitute before it disappears.

Yet it is a challenge made harder by the high expectations of western consumers. Efforts to commercialise varieties that haven't tasted quite like the Cavendish have failed. So the objective is to create a variety that's just as tasty and easy to transport and resistant to Panama disease. Broadly, there are two ways to do this: cross-breeding the Cavendish with disease-resistant varieties or editing its genome to increase its hardiness.

The former approach is made difficult, but not impossible, by the Cavendish's seedlessness (although one in every 10,000 or so do have seeds). But it is also imprecise: there is no guarantee that the fruits of Cavendish plants pollinated by other varieties will exhibit disease resistance rather than just tasting worse.

The Future of Bananas
by James Dale

Melville House £9.99 pp144

The queen of Regency romance romps back

This charming new 'Georgette Heyer' novel reads just like the real thing. By Matthew Sweet

Georgette Heyer, the queen of Regency romance, hated the modern world. "Oh Christ," she wrote, "why did I have to be born into this filthy age!" Nor did she much care for her readers: fan letters went straight in the bin. But the people she disliked most of all — after literary critics, interviewers, the taxman and "lazy sods [who] go out on strike for more pay and less work" — were writers who imitated her.

Her estate, however, has no such animus. So, 52 years after Heyer's death — an event hastened by her enthusiasm for gin, cork-tipped cigarettes and amphetamines — here comes Sophie Irwin, under official patronage, to present *Henrietta*, a pastiche that will have devotees raising their quizzing glasses to judge whether the author has cut a dash or made a cake of herself.

From behind my fan I say: she's done it. Heyer, minus the casual antisemitism, is successfully ventriloquised.

Henrietta
by Sophie Irwin

Century £16.99 pp368

There are balls, a duel, an elopement, a ride in a hot-air balloon...

Irwin is no debutante. She wrote a university dissertation on Heyer's wartime appeal as air-raid shelter reading, and has since produced three novels with Heyerish texts and rom-com titles. *How to Lose a Lord in Ten Days* (2025) is the wittiest and *A Lady's Guide to Fortune-Hunting* (2022) the most lauded.

Irwin's new heroine has no need to saddle up. Henrietta Clithero has £80,000 in the bank. Conversely, Arthur, Lord Allerton, the object of her undeclared affections, is embarrassed, having returned from the Peninsular War to the kind of financial crisis that obliges a family to sell its deer park. Arthur's mother proposes a solution that he is too chivalrous to entertain. He will not marry Hetty for her money.

But the Allerton siblings — the skittish Trixie and Timothy, Hetty's "fairy godmother" who favours "dove-coloured pantaloons and shining hessian boots" and is "certainly not the duelling sort" — learn that she has a secret love. They chivvy her into admitting that the mystery man is a European noble and assume she means one of the many titled Belgians swashing about in London for the Season. Arthur makes the same assumption and volunteers to coach Henrietta to win the heart of his non-existent rival. The misunderstanding might be untangled in a paragraph, but the rules of the genre demand that it stays enjoyably knotty.

"The relationship between her life and some Shakespearean comedy was growing rather alarming," the narrator reports. "All one needed was the addition of a set of twins and the chaos would be complete." Possibly because Heyer made this addition herself in *The Masqueraders* (1928) and *False Colours* (1963), Irwin contents herself with balls (masked and unmasked), a duel, an elopement, a ride in a hot-air balloon, a trip to see Edmund Kean give his Iago, and the certainty that all will be resolved by the final chapter.

A convincing claim on the Heyer inheritance, however, demands more than a sparkling romantic plot: the pretender must also match her appetite for period detail. Heyer was a demon for it. She owned a two-volume set of Pierce Egan's 1821 book *Life in London*, which she polished with a special cloth, and bought old letters at auction to increase her stock of authentic Regency language. Hetty's trip to Hatchard's to collect Arthur Young's *General View of Agriculture* is an example of Irwin reaching beyond Heyer, but she is

Georgette Heyer and Sophie Irwin

A more promising approach, in Dale's view, is genetic modification, which enables breeders to tweak the exact genes that determine disease resistance, taste and texture. Yet this approach faces varying levels of regulatory obstruction round the world. While Britain, the US and Australia have liberalised their gene-editing regulations, the EU remains implacably opposed.

Dale, an agricultural scientist at the Queensland University of Technology, has in fact created a Cavendish banana genetically modified to resist Panama disease. It was approved for sale in Australia in 2024 — a world first for a GM banana.

Over the next decade Dale believes artificial intelligence will help researchers to design bananas that are resistant to not only diseases but also increasingly severe heatwaves and droughts driven by climate change. They could even create bananas with new tastes and nutrient profiles; for instance, a purple banana rich in the antioxidants that make blueberries a superfood.

The only barrier is regulators, to whom Dale gives short shrift. "The future impacts of diseases and climate change must surely outweigh apprehension or indecision about harnessing advanced genetic technologies," he writes.

While Dale occasionally overestimates his readers' interest in the finer points of banana genetics, swarming the page with obscure technical terms, on the whole this is a readable guide to one of the environmental problems that will show up on our shelves in short order. It is tempting to read it as a fable for the obliviousness and ingenuity with which humanity, time and again, stumbles into and gets itself out of environmental problems. In this case at least, it looks like we'll get out of it.

mostly content to borrow from her predecessor. Drunk people are blue-devilled (one of Heyer's favourite terms). Irwin's Captain Edgewood is a snirp; so is the Duke of Sale in *The Foundling* (1948). When Arthur and Timothy dine on "fillets of salmon in a caper sauce, a blanquette of fowl, and a raised pie" they are eating the exact contents of a picnic favoured by Mr Templecombe in *Cousin Kate* (1948).

Heyer paid particular attention to descriptions of food in the work of her rivals: she considered a plagiarism suit against Barbara Cartland on these grounds. As Irwin knows, they were a prime source of pleasure for her original readers, for whom the 18th century embodied an escape from austerity and enforced communitarianism.

So what does the Regency do for us now? What is the use of *Henrietta*? A harder question to answer in an age when every supermarket sells salmon fillets. Perhaps it is plenitude, not deprivation, from which it offers respite; the thought that the love of your life might have been there all the time, rather than a million swipes away. For publishers, of course, it evokes a world in which Georgette Heyer was a regnant force who sold a million novels a year.

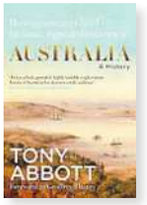
But let's not push it, particularly in a book review. "Remember," Heyer warned, in an essay on the poverty of literary criticism, "that this is the Day of the Little Man, when the more insignificant you are, and the more valueless your opinions, the greater will be your chance of obtaining a hearing." Fine. Just send me the next one.

LISA MAREE WILLIAMS/GETTY IMAGES

People on Bondi beach vote in Australia's 2025 federal election

Birth of a fair dinkum democracy

A rousing history of the convict colony turned thriving modern nation by one of its former PMs. By George Owers



Australia
A History
by Tony Abbott
HarperCollins £25 pp448

When Captain Arthur Phillip and his small British fleet arrived at Botany Bay on January 18, 1788, they were nonplussed to find that a French expedition was only narrowly behind them. They beat Jean Lapérouse's smaller fleet to the coast of New South Wales by five days. It is doubtful whether Lapérouse would have been in a position to establish a colony before Phillip even if he had arrived first, but it is clear that William Pitt the Younger's motivation in authorising the mission of Phillip and his first fleet was partly a desire to pre-empt the potential claims of imperial rivals, especially France, to this unknown land.

For Tony Abbott, the fact that Britain rather than absolutist France won this race is the key to Australia's great success. In his book he portrays the country he led as the prime minister between 2013 and 2015 as one of civilisation's great liberal projects, deriving from a British foundation of freedom, the rule of law and parliamentary government.

In Abbott's account, Australian history is a story of majestic progress towards greater prosperity and freedom: the country where all are given a "fair go" if they are prepared to "have a go". This is an unapologetic example of Antipodean Whig history.

This at first glance seems curious considering Australia's origin as a penal colony. As Abbott shows, however, the early governors of New South Wales were often surprisingly enlightened in their treatment of convicts, seeing incentives and rewards — an Australian emphasis on aspiration — as more effective ways of reforming criminals than whips and chains. One cannot help feeling that Abbott overplays his hand, but his view is surely nearer to reality than the idea popularised by Robert Hughes's *The Fatal Shore*, that the convict system was the British answer to Stalin's gulags.

In this book, Australian history is a story of majestic progress towards prosperity

As the 19th century progressed, the cautious Whig reformism of the early Australian project was leavened by an influx of those advocating a rather more thoroughgoing brand of radicalism. Free settlers began to outnumber convicts and "emancipists" (ex-convicts) and these "New Australians" mixed thrusting economic go-getting with radical politics. Ex-Chartists and Irish rebels jostled with free-booters and prospectors determined to make a killing out of the Victoria gold rush that fuelled the boom of the 1850s.

The result was that demands for full-blooded democratic reform grew. By the time the Australian colonies united under a federal constitution in 1901, such views had largely prevailed. Australia achieved universal manhood suffrage, female suffrage and the secret ballot several generations before Britain, and indeed most of Europe. Abbott's argument — that the young Commonwealth of Australia was an innovative pioneer of liberal and democratic values — is a strong one.

Australian liberalism was not, however, straightforward. Perhaps it was the nation's origin as a state-run penal colony reliant for decades on a top-down leadership, or its hard-scrabble egalitarianism, driven by its mixture of convicts and waves of free immigration, but Australians never had quite the intense libertarian suspicion of government that characterised that other thrusting former British colony, the United States. Laissez faire and free trade did not dominate Australian politics, even centre-right politics, in the late 19th and 20th centuries. This orthodoxy was reinforced by the rise of a combative Australian trade union movement and a Labor Party based on intense notions of "mateship" and disciplined collective action.

These feelings of egalitarian solidarity were not always extended beyond the British subjects who dominated the country. One of the first acts of the newly federated Australia in 1901 was to initiate "White Australia", a policy restricting non-white immigration that was fuelled by racism and a desire to retain the nation's British identity. Paradoxically, one of its biggest opponents was the British government, which objected to the discrimination of non-white subjects of the Empire.

The biggest fly in Abbott's soothing historical ointment is the colonists' treatment of the Aborigines, which has polarised Australians between the "black armband" account, which paints a sinister picture of a country tarred by its history of massacre, displacement and persecution, and the more positive "three cheers" view, stressing Australian pluck and progress.

Abbott does not deny the dark aspects of his story. He admits that "frontier life was brutal and dangerous, and... Aboriginal people suffered grievously". However, he hardly dwells on some of these aspects, devoting little more than a paragraph to the policy of child removal, whereby Aboriginal infants were forcibly taken from their parents in an attempt at coercive assimilation.

Abbott's view is that seeing Australian history as nothing more than a catalogue of racism and injustice is not only an over-simplification but a political dead-end that fosters only navel-gazing and misguided reverse discrimination. Better to try to extend the best parts of Australia's inheritance to groups who were excluded. Endlessly weaponising historical grievances, he argues, only produces a politics of self-consuming victimhood that practically benefits nobody and does little more than assuage the guilt of white progressives. Perhaps he overreacts in the opposite direction, but it's hard not to have sympathy with his view.

The book errs slightly too much in the direction of breathless patriotic uplift. The final chapter, in which Abbott is one of the key players in his own story, is unsurprisingly partial. Ultimately, however, his account is a good deal fairer to his critics than corresponding "black armband" accounts would be to the positive aspects of Australian history he emphasises. It's readable and skilfully structured, and ultimately it's refreshing to read a modern history of a western nation that is not the literary equivalent of pulling on a hair shirt. It's hard not to respond with, to borrow a vivid Australianism, a hearty cheer of "fair dinkum".

books

What were they thinking? The humdingers the Booker rejected

Here are 12 of our favourite novels, longlisted for Britain's leading literary prize, then unceremoniously dumped by the judges

ALAMY

Paul Mescal and Daisy Edgar-Jones in Normal People. Above right: Jenna Ortega in Klara and the Sun

Books chosen by Susie Goldsbrough, Laura Hackett, Robbie Millen and Johanna Thomas-Corr

This week we learnt which 13 novels are on this year's Booker prize longlist. Literary prizes are a brutal business — seven won't make it to the shortlist. Many Booker longlisted novels just disappear down the memory hole. Who remembers Ledia Xhoga's *Misinterpretation*, from last year? But sometimes the books that make it to the longlist stage then go no further — let's call them "the Booker rejects" — are better, or more entertaining, or more consequential than the eventual winners.

Any Human Heart by William Boyd (2002)

William Boyd's swashbuckling "cradle-to-grave" novel tells the whole life story of the drifting literary adventurer Logan Mountstuart, from birth to deathbed. It has had a far longer shelf life than most of the other books on the 2002 longlist. It's one of those perennially popular novels — always a safe recommendation — and although Boyd's characters sometimes feel a little thin, there's something delicious about his big canvas. Mountstuart's life spans the 20th century (and brushes against several of its famous figures), skipping from the Spanish Civil War to the Second World War, from Ian Fleming's spy squad to Jackson Pollock's New York. And for that beautifully chosen Henry James quotation of a title alone, it deserves its place in literary history. **SG**

Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín (2009)

This surely must be one of the most popular novels of the 21st century. Well, popularity and literary acclaim are rarely on the same page. Eilis Lacey leaves drab and straitened 1950s Ireland for New York. She battles with homesickness and the culture shock of living in a brash, noisy city before finding love with Tony, an Italian plumber. But when she is called back home by family tragedy, local lad Jim gently pursues her. Colm Tóibín is brilliant at writing about small lives in small towns, about regrets, longing, unspoken emotions. His follow-up, *Long Island*, is just as fine. **RM**

The Stranger's Child by Alan Hollinghurst (2011)

How do you follow the great success of *The Line of Beauty*? Well, you wait seven years — then conjure up this elegant, witty, decade-hopping novel. It starts in that ominously lovely summer of 1913. Cecil Valance, a flamboyant young poet, visits the boringly middle-class home of his Cambridge friend George. He's been having knee-tremblers with impressionable George, but then turns his attention to George's sister, Daphne, whom he kisses by the rockery. Cecil writes a poem while there, extolling these "two blessed acres of English ground"; his death in the Great War ensures this poem becomes a national favourite. The novel, a tale of secret and uncertain loves, of how memory and reputations are made, jumps forward in time, following the lives of those who knew Cecil. **RM**

The Green Road by Anne Enright (2015)

Anne Enright's 2007 novel, *The Gathering*, about a woman trying to come to terms with the death of her brother, was a worthy winner of the Booker prize. But my favourite by Enright is *The Green Road*. We are introduced to the Madigan children — Hanna, Dan, Constance and Emmet — and their mother, Rosaleen. We get glimpses of their childhood and the turning points in their individual characters, then Rosaleen summons them all home for Christmas before she sells the family house. She is a brilliantly unhinged character, clinging and difficult, and Christmas Day ends in a great panic. But not before Enright treats us to a glimpse of Celtic Tiger excess in the Christmas shopping: "She got wine, sherry, whiskey, fresh nuts, salted nuts, crisps, bags and bags of apples, two mangoes, a melon, dark cherries for the fruit salad, root ginger..." **LH**

The North Water by Ian McGuire (2016)

Patrick Sumner, a Homer-reading, laudanum-addled former army surgeon, joins a whaler headed for the Arctic Circle in 1859. But this journey is ill-starred. The captain has a reputation for being unlucky — his last ship sank — and on this voyage there's a psychopath on the loose, polar bears are fought, "Esquimaux" are encountered, blood (human and whale) is spilt by the gallon, and the brute force of nature is unleashed against the men on the ice floes of Greenland. It's a terrific, vivid, timber-shivering adventure story. Little wonder it was turned into a TV series (and didn't make the shortlist). **RM**

Matthew Macfadyen, Jim Broadbent and Sam Claflin as Logan Mountstuart in the TV version of Any Human Heart

Normal People by Sally Rooney (2018)

Love it or hate it, the fact that you have an opinion on Sally Rooney and her books is proof of their astonishing reach. *Normal People* is perhaps the most far-reaching of the bunch, a seemingly simple will-they-won't-they love story about two teenagers living in the west of Ireland. Marianne is rich and clever and almost universally despised by her classmates. Connell is sporty, attractive, working-class and popular, but not quite as "normal" as he wants to make out. This unlikely pair navigate school and university together, coming of age but never quite mastering how to communicate with each other. It's a love story, but it's also the story of a generation who grew up in the wake of the 2009 recession, their hopes and dreams, their politics, their romantic entanglements. **LH**

Such a Fun Age by Kiley Reid (2019)

This tragicomedy, set in Philadelphia, about a young black nanny and her white, wealthy, wetly liberal employers arrived just before the Black Lives Matter movement went global and proved to be a far more sophisticated, wry, compassionate novel of contemporary race relations than any number that followed. It has a belter of an opening scene: one night, as 25-year-old Emira, having been asked to work overtime, wanders round a posh grocery store with her young charge Briar, she's stopped by a suspicious security guard and accused of kidnapping the child. **SG**

The Mirror & the Light by Hilary Mantel (2020)

While *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies* built the foundation, *The Mirror & the Light* brought Hilary Mantel's entire sprawling canvas together. Covering Thomas Cromwell's final four volatile years (1536–40), this 890-page concluding volume operates as a high-stakes hard-boiled political thriller — replete with court intrigue, northern rebellions and the grim paranoia of a crumbling king — while remaining brilliantly funny about power, ambition and human nature. Mantel is superb at capturing the mixture of farce and mortal danger in Henry VIII's household. She makes Tudor politics feel cinematic and alive without sacrificing historical authenticity. **JTC**

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro (2021)

Kazuo Ishiguro's novels have a way of expanding in your mind long after you've finished them. His eighth is wonderfully affecting. Narrated by Klara, an Artificial Friend waiting to be chosen by a child, it asks timeless questions about love, consciousness and what it means to care for another person, without ever becoming a conventional

dystopian novel about AI. As ever, Ishiguro's restraint is the source of its emotional power: every observation feels precise, every omission deliberate. I'm reading it with my 12-year-old son and it's interesting how completely it speaks to both of us, despite our different perspectives. **JTC**

Old God's Time by Sebastian Barry (2023)

Tom Kettle, a once sharp-nosed Dublin copper, has retired to a wicker chair overlooking the Irish Sea — until the day two young policemen come asking questions about a nasty old case, one involving "fecking priests". How much does Tom remember and how much of those horrible events is he deliberately trying to forget? This was Sebastian Barry's fifth Booker nomination; he's from a generation of quietly, consistently brilliant Irish novelists (see also: John Banville and Anne Enright) who are fixtures on Booker lists. It would be nice if he won one of these days. **SG**

Headshot by Rita Bullwinkel (2024)

Rita Bullwinkel entered the Booker ring with this fast-paced, sweaty debut. If only she'd got through to the next round. It's set at a boxing tournament for teenage girls and follows them fight by fight. We meet Andi, who can't stop thinking about the little boy she couldn't save while she worked as a lifeguard, his "blue cheeks" and "corn-dog thigh". There's Artemis, born of boxing royalty, and Rachel, who shouts "I'm a toaster" to psych out her opponents. Each one of them is utterly committed to the sport, no matter the wreckage to their lives — or their bodies. The writing is breathlessly good — short, staccato, but always careful: "Rachel Doricko's right arm is like a rubber band that has repeatedly been pulled back. It snaps onto Kate Heffer with loud, quick snaps." You won't be able to put it down. **LH**

Seascraper by Benjamin Wood (2025)

If you believe great fiction is built on great sentences, then you'll agree that Benjamin Wood's *Seascraper* deserved much greater recognition in 2025. Wood creates suspense as much through language as plot. His fifth novel follows Thomas, a young shrimper scraping out a lonely existence on a bleak stretch of Lancashire coast until an enigmatic Hollywood director arrives, claiming to need his help with scouting locations. Every sentence tightens the novel's spell rather than merely decorating it. The beach becomes a living thing: "The sand's got arms in different places... if you're not careful or you're stupid, you'll get dragged below." Few modern novelists fuse physical detail and inner life so powerfully. **JTC**

The comic book genius who put the darkness back into Batman

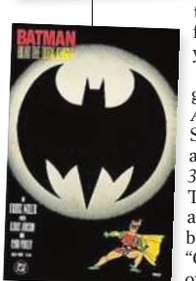
Frank Miller's wild, outsized imagination helped to change comics as we know them. By Sam Leith

Anyone who wasn't a 12-year-old comics nerd in 1986 will find it hard to truly understand just how exciting that year was. All but simultaneously, and as if out of nowhere, two of the most astounding works the medium had seen in decades appeared, in lavishly produced serial form. They were Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons's *Watchmen*, and Frank Miller's reinvention of Batman, *The Dark Knight Returns*.

It's still hard not to see Moore and Miller as the Tweedledum and Tweedledee of the great leap forward in superhero storytelling. Moore was British; Miller was American. Moore was intellectual; Miller was visceral. Moore was iconoclastic; Miller was iconographic. Moore was superego; Miller was id. Moore was Apollonian; Miller was Dionysian. And so on.

The clever kids were Team Moore. You could marvel at the intricacy of *Watchmen*'s clocklike construction, its ironies and its nested narratives; the poised stasis of Gibbons's drawings; its Cold War paranoia and its savage debunking of the psychosis underpinning the whole idea of costumed vigilantes.

But Miller — aided by Klaus Janson's scratchy inks and Lynn Varley's moody colour-work — was interested in delivering cheap thrills as they had never been delivered before. His Batman was thickset, middle-aged, angry, ultraviolent and so ferociously singular of purpose he thought nothing of starting a punch-up with a god. And finishing one. Miller was all about leaning into the psychosis, making costumed heroes bigger and more mythological and more thrilling than ever. Me, I thought — and still think — that you were allowed to like both.



Miller, 69, grew up in semi-rural Vermont, but even before he had visited New York that city was the landscape of his imagination — think of all those water towers and fire escapes in his run writing the *Daredevil* comics. He arrived in New York in 1976, when it was still good and scuzzy and nobody called Hell's Kitchen "Clinton", and started to make his way doing what he had known he wanted to do since boyhood. We learn in his book *Push the Wall* that, having made his first comic at the age of five, he told his mother: "This is what I'm doing for the rest of my life." She said: "You can do anything you want if you set your mind to it." He did.

The Dark Knight Returns may have made him a superstar, but before that he invented *Daredevil*'s sexy arch-foe/lover Elektra and, in a very Greek move, killed her off. That got him death threats from fans. His first non-franchise comic was the ambitious commercial misfire *Ronin*, a samurai/cyberpunk mashup of great kinetic power. That misfire was right before *Dark Knight* made him immortal, so he has stern things to say about learning from failure and sticking to your guns.

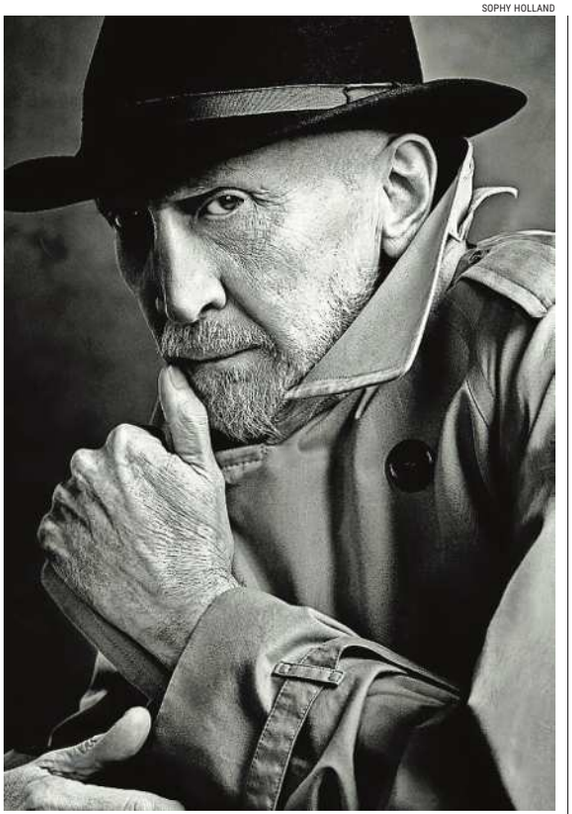
He went on to write the groundbreaking *Elektra: Assassin* mini-series with Bill Sienkiewicz's paintings; write and draw his stand-alone *300* (about the Spartans at Thermopylae); and write and draw the hyper-stylised, black-and-white pulp noir — "Conan in a trench coat" — of the *Sin City* books, which were filmed by Robert Rodriguez with Miller as co-director. Miller also wrote the script for *RoboCop 2*, but nobody's perfect.

When 9/11 happened in his beloved New York, Miller, as he admits here, went a little off the deep end. Steeped in the moral binaries of comics, he produced a crude and campy revenge fantasy called *Holy Terror* in which seven shades of spit were beaten out of some offensively caricatured Muslim terrorists. The quasi-fascist worship of the strongman that uneasily underlies comic book heroes, and into which Miller's work undoubtedly taps, came a bit too close to the surface for comfort. As he says now, this self-described piece of "propaganda... didn't persuade or seduce; it ranted. It railed and snarled and bellowed. And the audience charged the exits." But, as he frames it, he learnt from that failure.

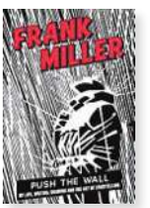
Push the Wall isn't really an autobiography — Miller's alcoholism is dispatched in a paragraph or two; we learn about his love life and friendships only in sidelong flickers. It's more of a creative manifesto: exuberant, braggadocious, two-fisted in the prose (though a little repetitive), clear-eyed about what Miller sees as the value and affordances of comics as an "outlaw" artform, and really interesting — if this is your sort of thing — on how and why his work is as it is. No surprise that he namechecks Jung, Joseph Campbell and the bicameral mind.

He tells you how Jack Kirby and Gil Kane tore up the six-panel template, and how he went on to build on their innovations; how vertical or horizontal panels change the pacing; how spattering from a toothbrush adds energy to his pages; what you can do with breeze-blown bits of paper; how he got rid of Batman's noisome yellow chest roundel; and how much you have to throw away if you're going to make anything that lives.

SOPHY HOLLAND



Frank Miller. Left: two of his greatest comic hits



Push the Wall
My Life, Writing, Drawing and the Art of Storytelling *by Frank Miller*

Canongate £26 pp224

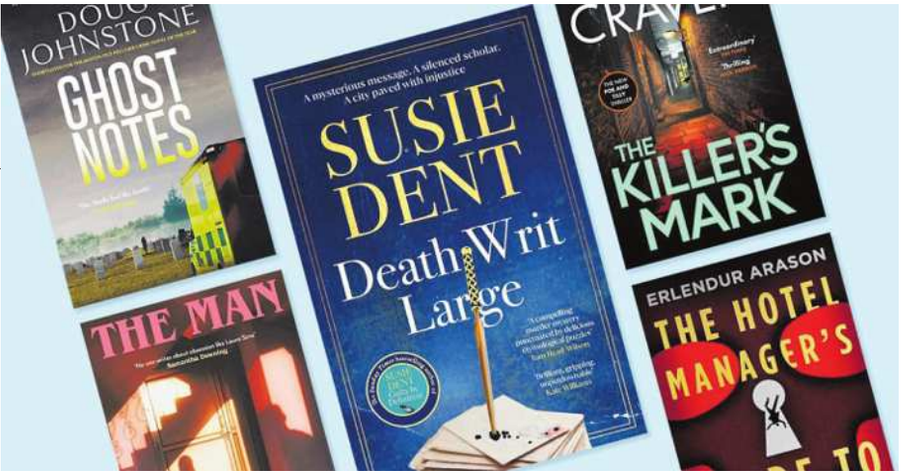
'I made a list of fun things to draw: cars, sexy women, guns and trench coats'

All the influences you expect to find are cited here: Kirby, Neal Adams and Will Eisner, Bronze Age mythology, samurai pulps, film noir, westerns, the crime novels of Chandler, Hammett and Jim Thompson, and so on. But also, some readers will be surprised to find, Miller draws inspiration from Arthur Rackham, Norman Rockwell, *Calvin and Hobbes*, Dr Seuss, *Peanuts*, El Greco and... *Charlotte's Web*?

Miller's career starts with a boy reading an EC horror comics omnibus until the pages fall out. It ends with panels from his comics being included in an exhibition in the Louvre. But in the end it's always back to the drawing board at what he calls (tellingly) his "Beachhead". Like Moore, he's wary of the way his reinventions — all superheroes must now be "dark" — have been enshrined as pompous canonical conventions. His guiding philosophy might be put this way: "Before I started *Sin City* I made a list of the fun things to draw: cars, sexy women, guns and trench coats. Then I thought to myself: 'This is gonna be fun.'" And it was, wasn't it?

books

A case to cause betwitterment



crime

Susie Dent's latest mystery, plus comical cops and mobsters. By Mark Sanderson

Book of the month

Death Writ Large by Susie Dent
Zaffre £20 pp416
Martha, Alex and Safi, Susie Dent's word-wranglers from the Clarendon English Dictionary introduced in *Guilty by Definition* (2024), investigate another literary mystery in the picturesque "Morsoleum" of Oxford. This one involves runes spelling out biblical quotations that are being daubed all over the city, and a dead university lecturer. Martha is reunited with DI Oliver Caldwell, for whom she still carries a torch. Can they cast light on a campaign of vandalism that seems to be targeting a group of former students known as the Cabal? You have got to love a novel that devotes a whole paragraph to alleys: "Snickets and jitties, ginnels and chares, vennels and entries." The most important entries here are those in the OED — lexicography, after all, is a study in detection — and Dent, in this Switchback ride through the stacks, again treats us to some of the most obscure: betwitterment (excitement), ludibry (contempt), shivelight (sliver of light), tholemudig (patience-weary) and, best of all, cover-slut. Not a surrogate sex worker but a garment worn to hide a stain.

The Hotel Manager's Guide to Murder by Erlendur Arason, trans. Quentin Bates *Blekverk £10.99 pp224*
Torfi Pall Saevarsson has worked at the Hotel Bristol in Reykjavik for ten years. He is so shocked when an HR manager sacks him, he can only say: "But I know everything." Their response shocks him even more: instant promotion, a large raise and an envelope stuffed with used banknotes. What is going on? Erlendur Arason's hilarious tale of cops and mobsters — the first part of a trilogy — proves that it's not only hotel guests that do "crazy things": the staff are at it too. He takes the reader through the swing doors that separate the halls of luxury from "a different world of scuffed off-white walls and scarred linoleum" and out into the service area beyond the kitchens where eagle-eyed derelicts lurk in the hope of a bowl of porridge. Torfi realises the key to survival is "staying useful", even if that means disposing of a rent boy's body. An impressive debut.

The Man by Laura Sims
Verve £10.99 pp288
Judith Stanley, a middle-aged housewife in 1960s New Jersey, has every reason to be neurotic. A sexual assault when she was 16 left her inner thighs horribly scarred. Photography enables her to exert some control so she is delighted when her college tutor tells her she has "an uncanny eye". However, she keeps spotting a man in the background of her pictures and starts receiving anonymous phone calls. Is she mad as well as sad? Halfway through this intense mystery the viewpoint switches to that of her tutor, Paul Sorenson, who wants to use Judith's superb photographs to revive his stalled artistic career. He may appreciate that "art can be a razor blade", but can't foresee the dreadful consequences of his obsessive behaviour. *The Man*, worthy of Margaret Millar or Ruth Rendell, is psychological suspense at its best.

Ghost Notes by Doug Johnstone
Orenda £9.99 pp276
Dorothy, Jenny and Hannah Skelf — eco-friendly undertakers and part-time private investigators in Edinburgh — have been burying bodies and unearthing dirty secrets since 2019. Their seventh outing involves a female property developer with a taste for Irish boys who is being blackmailed, and a dodgy company making a fortune from "grief bots", avatars of lost loved ones that allow you to commune with the dead. Doug Johnstone can switch from the cosmic (the nature of neutrinos) to the comic (the antics of a cat called Schrödinger) in a single page. Dorothy's drumming, Jenny's drinking and Hannah's disappointment all play a part in a typically eventful tale that suggests — despite all the misery and death — that human decency will prevail.

The Killer's Mark by MW Craven
Constable £22 pp480
The ex-cop Washington Poe and the tech whizz Tilly Bradshaw, "gumshoes for hire" in Carlisle, Cumbria, agree to help Esmerée Blue, a mouthy 15-year-old girl, find her mother who, identified by a tattoo on the sole of her foot, has been spotted performing in a skin flick. The case requires a deep dive into the scabrous world of modern pornography yet prompts the neurodiverse Tilly to consider having sex for the first time: "Maybe I've been mistaking my sex drive for a vitamin B12 deficiency." It's not long before the National Crime Agency, the FBI and the triads — especially a villain called Donyang Dong — stick their noses in. Devotees of Mike Craven's signature mix of dark humour and disturbing violence will be delighted to know that *The Killer's Mark* contains buckets of both. If Poe and Bradshaw have a mission statement, it is "to stand up for the little person". Their seventh adventure confirms them as one of the greatest duos in crime fiction.

To order copies go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935

Rereading The Driver's Seat by Muriel Spark

The author scared herself with this spare, sinister novel, written in a frenzy. By James Bailey

There's a video clip that I never grow tired of revisiting. The footage, taken from a BBC interview filmed in 1971, presents a 53-year-old Muriel Spark seated in the study of her opulent Rome apartment. Spark, all backcombed hair and designer labels, is explaining how she goes about writing a novel.

"I begin at the beginning," she announces, as if this were the most straightforward thing imaginable. "I write the title, then I write my name. I write 'Chapter One', and then I write on." She might make the odd revision as she goes along, she concedes, but that's the limit. "Then it goes to the typist and she types it. And then I revise that and that's the book. That's finished."

She wasn't kidding. Compare the handwritten manuscripts in Spark's archives against their published counterparts and you'll notice that they share an eerie, near-perfect likeness. It is as if, you begin to suspect, she simply channelled those slim, elegant books of hers into being.

"How do you do it? I am dazzled," Evelyn Waugh asked Spark after reading *The Bachelors* (1960), her fifth novel in just three years. What "inexhaustible source", he wondered, was she drawing from? For Spark, the answer was quite simple. She was "paralysed as a writer", she once remarked, unless she obeyed her own "queer dictatorial sense". She would go wherever she was led, putting one word after the other with unwavering devotion.

With her 1970 novel *The Driver's Seat*, though, that "queer dictatorial sense" delivered Spark to a new and nightmarish extreme. Having relocated to Rome in 1967 (one of her many self-described exiles in a life that included years spent in Edinburgh, southern Africa, London, New York and Tuscany), she had become fascinated with newspaper reports concerning women found murdered in the city's parks.

She also found herself drawn to recording details of the blankly impersonal interiors she passed through every day, from high-end department stores to airport lounges and chain hotels. Before long, something fiendish was growing in the pitch dark of her imagination: a story about a woman whose deathly scream calls time on a life defined by silent anonymity. Spark's spare, sinister book would be written up in a seven-week frenzy and finished from a hospital bed. "I frightened myself by writing it," she later said of the novel, "but I just had to go on."

The Driver's Seat introduces us to Lise, a woman who "might be as young as twenty-nine or as old as thirty-six". That sense of uncertainty was new territory for Spark; we are a long way from the sagacious narrators encountered in *Memento Mori* (1959) or *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), who are able to relay characters' private thoughts and motivations with airy assurance. In *The Driver's Seat*, reader and narrator are left instead to witness Lise's actions in a state of shared bafflement. Why, we wonder at the outset, is she modelling such a garish ensemble in a department store fitting room? Why does she react so furiously on learning that the dress she had hoped to buy is made from stain-resistant fabric? And who is the man she speaks excitedly of being on her way to meet?

And then it happens. Twenty pages into the book, Spark breaks from the present tense to offer a horrifying glimpse of the near future. The story we're reading, we realise with a lurch of the stomach, is a kind of crime reconstruction, pieced together by a narrator every bit as clueless as we are. By giving away the ending, Spark understood, she could seduce her readers into playing armchair detectives.

Elizabeth Taylor as Lise in the 1974 film adaptation

'I think it's probably my best novel — and it's the creepiest'

Investigative work in *The Driver's Seat*, however, turns out to be a maddening pursuit. Another flashforward shows a group of policemen in a "sad little office", condemned to go over "the same questions like the whorling shell of a snail". Lise, then, has transformed her neat, eminently legible little life into a blood-soaked mystery to be pored over without resolution.

In the decades that followed the novel's publication, Spark remained prolific. She wrote everything from bizarre ghost stories (like *The Hothouse by the East River)* to sly retellings of her time among the London literati during the 1950s (*Loitering with Intent* and *A Far Cry from Kensington*). But there is nothing in her oeuvre quite like *The Driver's Seat*. "I think it's probably my best novel to date," she said at the turn of the millennium, "and it's the creepiest." I am inclined to agree on both counts. It is the kind of taut, uncompromising book that emerges only through surrendering to your own "queer dictatorial sense". It is what you write when you have frightened yourself, but know, as Spark did, that you just have to go on.

James Bailey is the author of *Like a Cat Loves a Bird: The Nine Lives of Muriel Spark* (Sceptre)

bestsellers

TIMES Bookshop
To order any of the books reviewed go to *timesbookshop.co.uk* or call 020 3176 2935.
Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for **Times**+ members

The charts are enjoying a Christopher Nolan moment. Look at that: Homer's *The Odyssey* takes four places in the charts. *The Iliad* has also found its way into the charts. And there is space for Emily Wilson's *Crossing the Wine-Dark Sea*, which explores ancient literature and the art of translation, and Stephen Fry's retelling of Homer's epic.

Some readers raised their eyebrows at *The Odyssey* appearing in non-fiction. The Times knows Homer's work is myth and that cyclopses aren't real. Waterstones, whose chart this is, also knows that, but one of the quirks of the way it classifies books is that poetry is counted as non-fiction.

Fun fact: the actual first name of James Daunt, the swift-footed managing director of Waterstones, is Achilles.

Paperback Fiction

1 (1) **My Husband's Wife** Alice Feeney *Pan £9.99*
2 (2) **The Correspondent** Virginia Evans *Penguin £9.99*
3 (4) **Sunstruck** William Rayfet Hunter *Penguin £9.99*
4 (6) **The Names** Florence Knapp *Phoenix £9.99*
5 (5) **The Artist** Lucy Steeds *John Murray £10.99*
6 (—) **Odyssey** Stephen Fry *Penguin £10.99*
7 (3) **The Secret of Secrets** Dan Brown *Penguin £9.99*
8 (9) **The Eights** Joanna Miller *Penguin £9.99*
9 (new) **It's Not What You Think** Clare Mackintosh *HarperCollins £9.99*
10 (10) **Project Hail Mary** Andy Weir *Penguin £9.99*

Hardback Fiction

1 (6) **May We Feed the King** Rebecca Perry *Granta £14.99*
2 (new) **Prince of Swords** Elise Kova *Hodderscape £22*
3 (5) **Yesteryear** Caro Claire Burke *4th Estate £16.99*
4 (4) **Getting Away with Murder** Shari Lapena *Bantam £20*
5 (7) **Land** Maggie O'Farrell *Tinder £25*
6 (8) **Dungeon Crawler Carl** Matt Dinniman *Michael Joseph £22*
7 (new) **Cool Machine** Colson Whitehead *Fleet £22*
8 (9) **The Things We Never Say** Elizabeth Strout *Viking £18.99*
9 (—) **It Could Have Been Her** Lisa Jewell *Century £22*
10 (—) **The Midnight Train** Matt Haig *Canongate £20*

Paperback Non-fiction

1 (2) **The Odyssey** Homer, trans. Emily Wilson *Norton £14.99*
2 (1) **Mother Mary Comes to Me** Arundhati Roy *Penguin £12.99*
3 (3) **Murdoku M Garand** *Penguin £16.99*
4 (6) **The Odyssey** Homer, trans. EV & DCH Rieu *Penguin £9.99*
5 (new) **Head North** Andy Burnham & Steve Rotheram *Trapeze £10.99*
6 (5) **Careless People** Sarah Wynn-Williams *Pan £10.99*
7 (4) **Lifelines: Searching for Home in the Mountains of Greece** Julian Hoffman *Elliott & Thompson £10.99*
8 (9) **Murdoku Volume 2: Back in Time** M Garand *Penguin £16.99*
9 (new) **Crossing the Wine-Dark Sea** Emily Wilson *Profile £12.99*
10 (7) **This Way Up** Map Men *Mudlark £10*

Hardback Non-fiction

1 (5) **The Odyssey** Homer, trans. EV & DCH Rieu *Penguin Classics £18.99*
2 (1) **London Falling** Patrick Radden Keefe *Picador £22*
3 (3) **The Land and Its People** David Sedaris *Abacus £20*
4 (4) **Regime Change** Jonathan Swan & Maggie Haberman *Simon & Schuster £28*
5 (6) **BBQ** Jamie Oliver *Michael Joseph £30*
6 (7) **An Expert Witness** Sue Black *Doubleday £22*
7 (8) **The Book of Birds** Robert Macfarlane & Jackie Morris *Hamish Hamilton £35*
8 (9) **The Let Them Theory** Mel Robbins *Hay House £22.99*
9 (—) **Things I Told My Notes App: Secret Diary of an Oversharer** Milly Goldsmith *Bantam £16.99*
10 (—) **The Iliad** Homer, trans. EV & DCH Rieu *Penguin Classics £20*

Waterstones THE NUMBER IN PARENTHESES REPRESENTS CHART POSITIONS LAST WEEK. DATA SUPPLIED BY AND COPYRIGHT TO WATERSTONES FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 25

children's book of the week

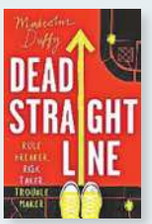
When teenage kicks go badly wrong. By Lucy Bannerman

Sixteen-year-old Rory is the risk-taking, rule-breaking leader of a gang. It's not a big gang. It includes four deadbeat friends and a new recruit: his girlfriend's younger brother, Yell.

"None of us will ever be the prefects. Defects, more like," Rory boasts when he still has his swagger. "We don't have many rules. We're not the government. But we do have one. You gotta take part. Unfortunately, Yell doesn't seem to like this rule."

Time for Yell's first "Dead Straight Line", the game Rory has invented to keep them entertained in their home town in northern England. Take two points on the map and go in a straight line from one to the other. Through gardens, over fences, no deviations.

"On a danger scale of one to ten, where one is reading a book and ten is walking into a cage of lions wearing mince, this is... four," Rory says inaccurately before bullying Yell into his trespassing adventure. It goes very wrong and Rory must spend the rest of the story trying to redeem himself.



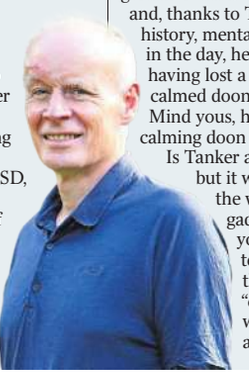
Dead Straight Line
by Malcolm Duffy (12+)
Zephyr £8.99 pp320

He loses friends, his girlfriend and the trust of his family.

When someone starts a vendetta against his family, throwing bricks and setting the garden shed on fire, he must take responsibility for what he has done while also protesting his innocence over lies that have gone too far.

Enter Tanker, an endearing 80-year-old Geordie who is a Falklands veteran with PTSD, "an accent as impenetrable as steel" and a few regrets of his own.

This is a refreshing, emotionally intelligent story told by Malcolm Duffy, *right*, with clarity and pace. My 12-year-old son loved it. It's easy to follow with digestible chapters that bound along as quickly as a burglar through a back garden. It deals with cowardice, bravery and, thanks to Tanker's chequered history, mental health. Violent back in the day, he is now in a care home having lost a leg to diabetes. "I've calmed doon these last few years. Mind yous, had a helluva lot of calming doon to dee."



Is Tanker a cartoon? Possibly, but it works. "Divvent take the word of a daft old gadgy like me. Make your own mind up," he tells Rory, who discovers that the wisdom of this "old gadgy" is exactly what he needs. Powerful and punchy.

Eight days from £1,699pp*
Times+ members save £100^

GUIDED TOUR ONLY

Highlights of the Amalfi Coast

August to November 2026 and March to December 2027

Live la dolce vita for a week, exploring the best of the Amalfi Coast, one of the most dramatic stretches of coastline in Europe. Whether travelling to chic Capri by boat, admiring dreamy coastal views from the Path of the Gods, or exploring romantic Ravello, you'll be spellbound by the natural beauty and cultural treasures of this land. Based at a family-run hotel in the quieter village of Agerola, you'll also visit the most famous sites in the Bay of Naples, namely the extraordinarily well-preserved ruins of Herculaneum and the legendary archaeological site of Pompeii.

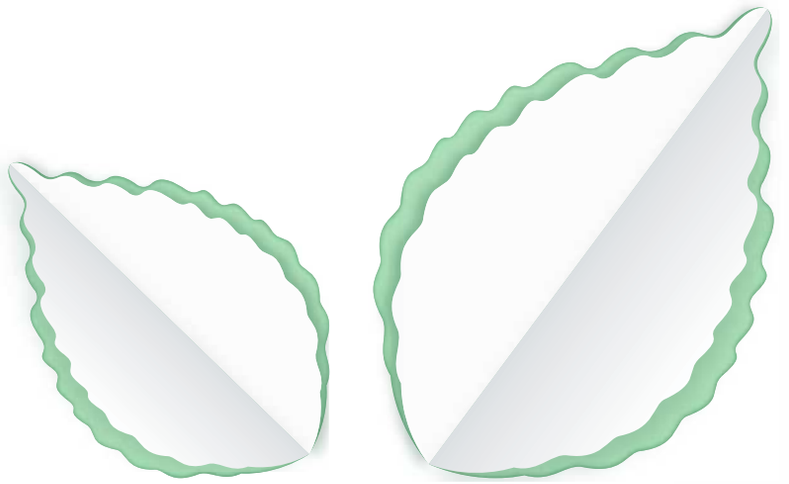
Contact us today to add flights to this package.

What's included
- Seven nights' five-star hotel
- Daily breakfast, one lunch and six dinners
- Guided tours of Herculaneum, Pompeii
- Visits to Positano and Capri by boat
- Sightseeing around Amalfi and Ravello
- Walk part of the divine Path of the Gods
- Overseas transport throughout
- Times+ members save £100^
  Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for your unique code

Call 0808 159 4306 or visit thetimes.com/th-amalficoast TIMES Holidays

Terms and conditions apply. *Price shown is per person, tour only (excludes flights) and based on two adults sharing on August and October 2026 departures. Single supplement an additional £305pp. Price correct as of July 30, 2026 and subject to change and availability. Price excludes mandatory local taxes/resort fees payable locally (amount varies by destination). ^£100 off Times+ offer applicable to each Times Holidays booking made by December 31, 2026 with a minimum spend of £2,000 when quoting your unique Times+ code. Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for full terms and conditions. Offers and bookings are subject to availability, see supplier website for full T&C's. This holiday is sold by Times Holidays as an agent for Exodus Travels and protected under ABTA P8770. For full booking conditions, visit thetimes.com/holidays/terms-and-conditions.

ABTA Travel with confidence ABTA No.P8770



PAPER LOVES TREES

European forests, which provide wood for making paper, paper packaging and many other products, have been growing by 1,500 football pitches every day!

Source: Two Sides Analysis of FAO data, 2005-2020
European Forests: EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and the UK

Discover the story of paper
www.lovepaper.org
Scan for paper facts, activities, blogs and much more!

LOVE PAPER®

Television & Radio

Your seven-day guide to film, streaming and more

August 1-7

TV column Page 20 / **Streaming** Pages 22-24
Best sport Page 25 / **Film guide** Pages 26-27
TV listings Pages 28-41 / **Radio** Pages 42-43

A legal thriller in the tropics

Possession

Gugu Mbatha-Raw plays a lawyer in a chilling supernatural horror about slavery, set in Jamaica
Thursday, Sky Atlantic, 9pm

Best of the week

DRAMA

1 Van der Valk

Marc Warren returns as the Dutch detective for a fourth season
Sunday, ITV1, 8pm

DOCUMENTARY

2 Richard E Grant's Very Modern Odyssey

The actor throws himself into an epic travelogue with his customary aplomb
Sunday, Channel 4, 8pm

STREAMING

3 Alley Cats

Ricky Gervais's new animation has a simple pitch: "It's cats, and they swear"
Friday, Netflix

PODCAST

4 Stories of Art

These tales of great works will make you want to rush to the nearest gallery
James Marriott review, p25

SPORT

5 Live Premier Padel

The world's fastest-growing racket sport makes its debut in London
Thursday, TNT Sport 4, 10am

TV Talk

By Ben Dowell

Matthew and Claire take a hike (literally)

The David Nicholls TV train keeps on rumbling. After the success of his poignant saga *Us* and the Netflix smash *One Day*, the BBC is taking on *You Are Here*, his tender account of a romance forged on the Coast to Coast walking trail. Matthew Macfadyen and Claire Foy, *below*, are playing Michael and Marnie, who set off on a walk that will change their lives. Nicholls says of the eight-parter, which is due to start filming soon: "The intention with the novel was to

write a close-up study of a relationship, but set against this magnificent landscape — and that's our ambition here too; to make something both intimate and epic, funny and dramatic, a romantic comedy with real emotion."

Henry James gets an upgrade

Widely considered Henry James's supreme achievement, *The Portrait of a Lady* has, in Isabel Archer, one of fiction's most complex figures. Nearly 60 years after its previous adaptation, the BBC is bringing it to TV as a six-part series. The *Servant* star Nell Tiger Free steps into Isabel's shoes, and the cast includes Gemma Arterton, Bill Nighy and Miranda Richardson. It's adapted by Rebecca Lenkiewicz and directed by Aisling Walsh, and filming is under way across Europe.

Back to school

Grab your pencil cases: Channel 4 is heading back to Thornhill Community Academy with a new series of *Educating Yorkshire*. After the triumph of last year's emotional reunion with the head teacher Matthew Burton — who helped a student to overcome his stutter in one of the most tear-jerking television moments of the 2010s — the broadcaster has commissioned another full eight-part series. Shooting begins soon.

Brummie tale goes big-budget

The surprise indie action breakout of the year is jumping to the small screen. Self-funded on a shoestring budget by the writer-star Kay S Ubhi, the gritty underworld thriller *This Is Birmingham* made Prime Video UK's Top Five this week. The film follows AK (played by Ubhi), the son of a newly imprisoned crime boss, who is forced to take the reins of the family business while dodging rival gangs desperate to carve up the city. Now Ubhi and the Bafta-winning producer Michael L Cowan are expanding it into a full-blown TV series. Move aside *Peaky Blinders*, Brum's crime scene just got a lot bigger.

tvtalk@thetimes.co.uk

Don't keep them to yourself, share your favourite hidden gems (and those shows to avoid)

When *I, Claudius* (now on iPlayer) is reviewed everyone talks about the actors but nobody mentions its wonderful director, Herbert Wise. He also directed Derek Jacobi in *Man of Straw* (adapted from the novel by the great Heinrich Mann). **Les Francis**

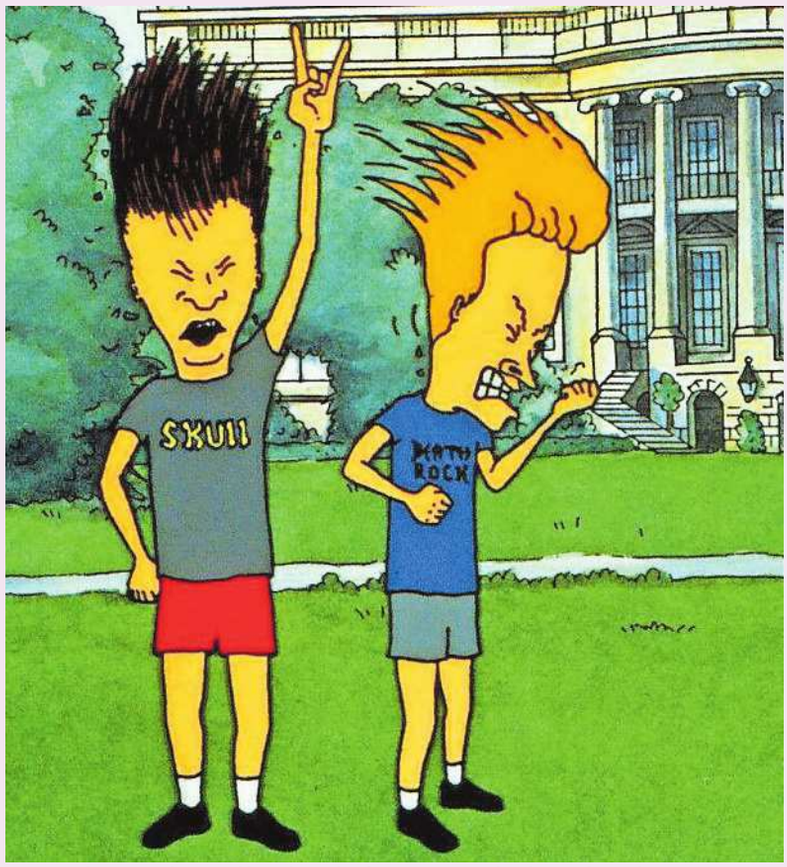
I started to watch the new prequel series to *Gomorrah* — *Gomorrah: The Origins* (Now) — and was appalled to find the dialogue was dubbed in American-English. I couldn't switch to the original Italian so I abandoned it. **Brian Wright**

I switched off the first episode of *The Rapture* about halfway through. This kind of dirge is exactly why the BBC is a sunk ship. **Polly Fyfe**

I read the novel on which *The Rapture* is based (by Liz Jensen) and I'm concerned the adaptation, with its different visions, will not hit the same climax. So far it's going well but we shall see. **John Darnell**

The second series of *Fleabag* is one of my favourite TV series of all time — ever since Phoebe Waller-Bridge looked into the camera and said, "This is a love story." And Andrew Scott as the hot priest is peerless. **Holly Fitzgerald**

I'm watching *Call the Midwife* again. There's something about the kindness of it that brings back my era of nursing. We did the job because we loved working with people. **Frances Stott**



Beavis and Butt-Head, created by Mike Judge for MTV in 1993, has been rebooted twice

my top ten

Animations for adults

Jake Helm picks the best cartoons for grown-ups, as Ricky Gervais's Alley Cats comes to Netflix

Let us know your suggestions at tvtalk@thetimes.co.uk

10 Family Guy

A sinister talking baby, Stewie, and a very intellectual dog, Brian, join the traditional dysfunctional family set-up of Peter and Lois Griffin and their kids, Meg and Chris. This show pokes fun at modern-day America and just keeps going. The jokes don't always land, but the sheer persistence of the creator, Seth MacFarlane, is impossible to ignore. *Disney+*

9 Beavis and Butt-Head

Mike Judge's delinquent duo are the most famous double act of the grunge generation. The ignorant, repulsive, stupid, crude and sexist cartoon kings of MTV skewered the world of teenage culture with their ridiculous laughs and running commentary on music videos. "It better start rocking, or I'll really give him something to cry about," Butt-Head says halfway through listening to Radiohead's *Creep*. *Paramount+*

8 Futurama

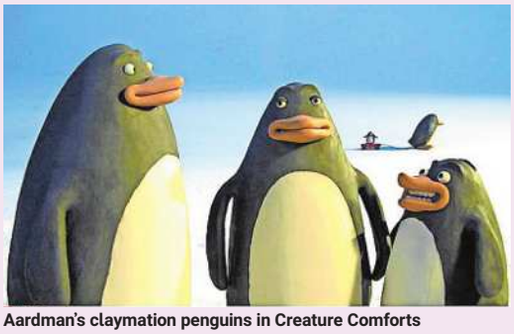
Created by Matt Groening, *Futurama* is about the world of tomorrow, told mainly through the pea-brained Fry, a former New York pizza delivery boy who is accidentally frozen and revived 1,000 years in the future. There's an "alcoholic, whore-mongering, chain-smoking" robot and a kick-boxing spaceship captain with one eye. Goofy with a sly satirical edge. *Disney+*

7 Arcane

Blending 2D and 3D animation, this epic fantasy charts the rising tension between a prosperous city and its seedy underbelly, focusing on the destructive rivalry between two orphaned sisters. Adapted from a video game, it is accessible to those who have never touched a controller and has a superb voice cast including Hailee Steinfeld and Ella Purnell. *Netflix*

6 Rick and Morty

Justin Roiland and Dan Harmon's sitcom is fresh, colourful and bonkers, with the feel of a Philip K Dick novel. Centred on a cynical alcoholic scientist and his perpetually anxious grandson, the series may seem frenetic at times, but there's substance beneath the chaos. Watch it from the beginning. *Now*



Aardman's claymation penguins in Creature Comforts

5 King of the Hill

Another animated sitcom from Mike "*Beavis and Butt-Head*" Judge, this time set in small-town Texas. Hank Hill is a simple propane gas salesman and the prism through which Judge challenges every stereotype of middle America with dry wit and mundane detail. A sitcom about barbecues and lawns turns out to be more sophisticated than most other shows. *ITVX*

4 Creature Comforts

Originally a 1989 short film, this lovely series pairs the voices of real people talking about their homes with a cast of claymation creatures. Affectionate and funny, it never once mocks its subjects. The short film won an Oscar in 1991 and the concept returned in a run of electricity adverts. Created by Aardman, the team behind Wallace and Gromit, this show is a thoughtful reminder that our problems are all the same, whether they come from humans or polar bears. *Buy/rent*

3 BoJack Horseman

There is no finer proof that animation has outgrown the nursery than this series, which balances surreal comedy with moments of profundity. Set in an alternative reality where mankind and talking animals live side by side, it follows the misadventures of BoJack (Will Arnett), a washed-up star of an old sitcom yearning for his lost glory days. It's a poignant show, refusing to flinch from the realities of mental health, racism or existential dread. *Netflix*

2 South Park

Rude, crude and unafraid to court controversy, this series chronicling the antics of the children Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Kenny began as early internet viral videos created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone. Now in its 28th season, it has achieved something few shows have: lampooning Donald Trump and his administration. See the episode where the American president is naked in bed with his unwilling sexual partner, Satan. After it aired, the White House described *South Park* as a "fourth-rate" show that was "hanging on by a thread". But it's a show going from strength to strength, seemingly determined to offend as many people as humanly possible. *Paramount+*

1 The Simpsons

"It's not as good as it used to be." That's the usual response when Matt Groening's series is mentioned. Maybe it's true, but only because the bar was set so high in the early 1990s that it's nearly impossible to better Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie's magic first decade. That said, dip into any episode of *The Simpsons* today and you will find the razor-sharp wit, social commentary and on-point observational humour that is the signature of the world's longest-running sitcom — and inspiration for other shows on this list. *Disney+*

Carol Midgley on TV

It's Death in Paradise meets Benidorm — and I love it

TV has been so grim and wilfully bleak lately that an untaxing, silly, upbeat comedy that isn't 'up itself' is a welcome tonic

Benidorm Is Murder
5

Ghosts Australia
iPlayer

Carolina Bécquer and John Hannah in Benidorm Is Murder. Below: Rowan Witt and Tamala Shelton in Ghosts Australia

What's the best tribute band name? I think Poxy Music is difficult to beat. As are Oasish and Lez Zeppelin. I have a grudging respect for Brian Maiden and a completely ungrudging one for the northeast England-based cover band named the Reet Hot Chili Peppers. That one is award-worthy.

But I think they missed a trick in 5's new comedy *Benidorm Is Murder* by calling a tacky tribute band Mis-Take That. Surely Fake That is punchier? These mock names tend to work better when only one letter is changed. Oh well, I suppose there are bigger things to worry about.

Benidorm Is Murder stars John Hannah as a washed-up former detective who has moved to Spain to run a pub called the Tavern, which shows live football and is festooned with Scotland flags. Benidorm, that magnet for Brits on the Costa Blanca, is fertile terrain for laughs, as Derren Litten's sitcom *Benidorm* proved by running to ten series over eleven years and producing a bounty of splendidly puerile one-liners and double entendres. Such as the much-memed moment when Jacqueline asked Kenneth, who had been pursued by a sailor the previous night: "Did you manage to shake off your seaman?"

Hannah's series is not as bawdy as *Benidorm* and doesn't have as many laugh-out-loud moments. But is it cheesy and daft with occasionally wooden acting and a big side serving of ham? Yes it is! But that's very much deliberate. I didn't expect to write this, but, to use the language of Gen Z, I low-key sort of loved it.

Maybe that's because television has been so grim and wilfully bleak lately that an untaxing, silly, upbeat comedy that isn't "up itself" is welcome medicine. This is a crowded market, but I'm sure we can make space in the cosy-crime canon for a working-class *Death in Paradise* set not amid lush palm trees and Caribbean beach bars, but in a land of full English breakfasts, mobility scooters and over-50s singles nights.

You might not have had Hannah down as obvious casting for a cheap and cheerful sitcom, but he was very good in *A Touch of Cloth*, Charlie Brooker's parody of police procedurals, and was in *Pauline Calf's Wedding Video*, a spoof of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, the film that brought Hannah to prominence.

He fits into the role of a grumpy expat divorcee, slightly lonely in his sliders worn with socks, and thrust into a sort of odd-couple sleuthing partnership with his bartender Rosa (Carolina Bécquer), who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of television crime shows such as *Midsomer Murders*. "I can't decide if you're more like Morse because you drink too much or more like Columbo because of your bad clothes," she tells him.

The Take That tribute band from Yorkshire squabbles because Darren, who plays Robbie Williams, thinks Mis-Take That are underachieving. "Last Tuesday at Waikiki's they were queueing round the block for Jeff Leppard," he says. This dialogue definitely doesn't take itself too seriously. At one point the bandmate playing Gary Barlow says: "You're sacked for good." Do you see what he did there?

Later, when he has been accused of throwing poor Darren off a balcony to his death, a police officer says that when it comes to murder, "It only takes a minute." Round of applause. I admire a show that leans into its corn.

In future episodes we will see Denise Welch, Tamzin Outhwaite and Alistair McGowan as guest stars, much in the mould of *Death in Paradise*. You could argue that shows of this kind, which gently minister to the quiet contentment of the nation, are needed now more than ever. Sadly, Darren never got to do his solo gig as Robbie, what with being found dead in the pool. Pity. If he'd stacked on a bit of weight at the all-inclusive buffet he could have called himself Blobby Williams.

Down under, this comedy is a ghost of its former self

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery then the team behind *Ghosts* must be puce-faced with blushes. First America did its version of the British comedy that was created by and starred the cast of the (brilliant) BBC children's show *Horrible Histories*. Now Australia has followed suit. But the trouble with imitations is that they can, like ghosts, be pale.

Australia has produced some cracking comedies — *Kath & Kim* and *Colin from Accounts* being two of them. But with the best will in the world I can't see this iteration of *Ghosts* joining the canon of greats. Put simply, it just isn't as funny. Like the US version, it lacks the original's sheer charm. This doesn't mean it is terrible. It isn't. But it is weaker.

It follows exactly the same (inspired) premise of the original, namely that a broke young woman, Kate (Tamala Shelton), who is looking round crummy flats with her boyfriend, Sean (Rowan Witt), discovers that she has inherited a run-down country manor from a great-uncle she never knew existed. At first she can't see the cast of ghosts from different centuries that inhabit the house, but after a near-death experience she suddenly can see and hear them, while Sean can't. Shelton and Witt are actually strong in these roles, but the actors playing the ghosts — not so much.

The ghost Tory MP has become a miner. In terms of laughs it just isn't the same

The problem, I think, comes down to two things: character and chemistry. The British team had a natural, effortless chemistry after working together on projects for years. The characters were well-written and fully formed. But here they pack less punch. For instance, in the British version, Julian the ghost was a brazen 1980s Tory MP, played by Simon Farnaby, who had been a philanderer in life and so was permanently trouserless. In the Australian take, this character has become Joon (George Zhao), a miner from the gold-rush era who had an eye for the ladies and so is also trouserless. In terms of laughs it just isn't the same.

But it is inventive and easy to watch. At one point Kate, in hospital, speaks to a sexist doctor, possibly from the 1950s, who tells her to "calm down and listen when a man is talking". Quite darkly, Lindy (Michelle Brasier), who was a Green Goddess-type TV aerobics presenter from the 1980s, is desperate to find out all the news she missed out on by dying, such as whether "Freddie Mercury settled down with a nice girl" and if "Princess Diana became the queen we all knew she would be".

One area in which the UK *Ghosts* excelled was straddling the line between adult and youth entertainment, managing to make gags on two levels. The house's posh Edwardian lady ghost was called Fanny, so that was a rich seam. When ghost hunters visited the house they wanted "a few Fanny pictures" and "a glimpse of Fanny". See? Innocent and smutty at the same time.

In *Ghosts Australia* the smut often feels more on the nose with talk of whether spectres still get erections (don't think about it). Frequently, the ghosts talk of being "sucked off" (being taken from the temporal world to the spiritual one). "Thank you, Kate, for helping me get sucked off," says one. OK, to be fair, that was quite funny.

Streaming

From iPlayer to Netflix — best new shows and hidden gems

New series

Hayes Warner and Igby Rigney star in The Shards

Disney+

The Shards
Available Thursday

A 1980s LA-set drama from Bret Easton Ellis

It makes perfect sense that *The Shards* should begin on May 23, 1980, the same day that *The Shining* was released: from the very start, Ryan Murphy's adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's 2023 novel is out to disturb. Narrated by Igby Rigney's deadpan high-schooler Bret, it tells the queasily intriguing story of a group of privileged LA teens whose gilded cage is infiltrated by an upsettingly inventive serial killer called The Trawler. Also starring celebrity scions Kaia Gerber (daughter of Cindy Crawford) and Homer (son of Richard) Gere, it's a slasher *Beverly Hills 90210*: nasty, cold and horribly compelling. **Victoria Segal**

Apple TV

Ted Lasso
Available Wednesday

Series return

As the football comedy returns, Ted (Jason Sudeikis) is back in Kansas, trying to spend more time with his son. But when AFC Richmond faces Rebecca (Hannah Waddingham), Leslie (Jeremy Swift) and Keeley (Juno Temple) turn up demanding a barbecue, Ted's plans are derailed and he contemplates a return to the UK to coach the women's team. With new cast members including Tanya Reynolds and Faye Marsay and the writers' ability to hit the sentiment button just enough, it's the perfect antidote to the post-World Cup lull.

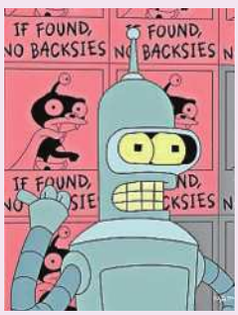
Brendan Hunt and Jason Sudeikis in Ted Lasso

Mitsy Sanderson stars in the golfing comedy Shanked

YouTube

Shanked
Available now

Set within a struggling US golf club, this micro-budget sitcom has not had an easy time of it. As soon as it premiered in 2025, Apple TV launched *Stick*, in which Owen Wilson played a former golf-pro who had fallen on hard times. Then, this July, Netflix launched *The Hawk*, starring Will Ferrell as a former golf-pro fallen on hard times. Despite its minuscule budget this ragtag semi-pro effort has an irresistible charm. Think the scrappy, self-funded charm of *Tires* crossed with the sociopathic chaos of *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* and you get the picture.



Fururama's robot Bender returns for season 14

Futurama
Available Monday

Series return

Thanks to the inclusion of such visually playful episodes as *The Numberland Gap* (in which the team entered a parallel universe populated entirely by numbers), season 13 of Matt Groening's surreal space sitcom was the strongest since the show's 2023 revival. Season 14, which launches today, promises to maintain that high standard with sustained riffs on space pirates, lab-grown meat and the nightmare of American healthcare, plus the grand return of Lord Nibbler.

The Ninth Jedi
Available Wednesday

New series

Set generations after the fall of the Empire and the Rebel Alliance, in an era when the Jedi have faded into legend, this expertly animated *Star Wars* anime by the Japanese studio Production IG is a story of insurgency and armed resistance. It is centred on a rebel group of trainee Jedis seeking to reforge the lightsaber weapons of legend and rise up against a new militarist era of Sith rule. It's gorgeous to look at and punctuated with thrilling moments. Animation is the best way forward for the franchise.

The Ninth Jedi follows a group of trainee rebels

Scott Speedman stars in the crime drama RJ Decker

RJ Decker
Available now

The surreal Florida crime novels of Carl Hiaasen are having a TV renaissance. After 2024's Vince Vaughn vehicle *Bad Monkey*, we now have this easy-going procedural based on Hiaasen's 1987 crime novel, *Double Whammy*, and devised by the Elementary creator Rob Doherty. Scott Speedman has a winning affability as the titular ex-con rebuilding his life as a private investigator, but the show's real charm lies in its female characters, especially Adelaide Clemens as Decker's journalist ex-wife and Jaina Lee Ortiz, who plays his femme fatale partner in crime.

Ms X
Available now

Since starring in *Home and Away*, Melissa George has quietly made a name for herself as one of the finest Australian actresses, with award-winning performances in *The Slap*, *In Treatment* and *The Mosquito Coast*. In this New Zealand-set dark comedy she plays a suburban mum who, after the death of her debt-ridden husband, gets pulled into the criminal underworld. The show walks a wobbly line between broad laughs and edgy drama, but George keeps it all grounded — bringing a believable humanity to the chaos.

The Australian actress Melissa George in Ms X

Paramount+

Nicole Kidman and Zoe Saldaña star in season three of Lioness

Lioness
Available Sunday

Series return

The second season of Taylor Sheridan's female-fronted CIA thriller rose above its hackneyed drugs cartel arc to deliver high-stakes entertainment. As "Joe", the CIA operative training female marines for deep-cover work, Zoe Saldaña was chilling in her compartmentalised efficiency, while Nicole Kidman invested her "Basil Exposition" role of bureaucratic supervisor with a necessary cool authority. Season three promises more tense scenes of modern warfare — but Sheridan could think about dispensing with that wearying "female kidnap and torture" trope.

Evil
Available now

After a brief tenure on Netflix, Robert and Michelle King's supernatural procedural now has a new home. An example of US network TV at its best, this deeply unsettling show stars Katja Herbers, Mike Colter and Aasif Mandvi as a forensic psychologist, a priest-in-training and a secular scientist working for the church to investigate instances of demonic possession. Drily funny, but also scary, the show's four seasons are elevated to greatness by the presence of Michael Emerson who invests the dark-arts manipulator Leland Townsend with a malevolent power.

The cast of the Australian version of Ghosts

Best comedy

BBC iPlayer

Ghosts Australia
Available now

The supernatural comedy heads Down Under

This Australian iteration of the BBC comedy *Ghosts* retains its original charm. Transported to the dilapidated Ramshead Manor in a remote corner of Western Australia, the premise remains intact: a young couple, Kate and Sean (played by Tamala Shelton and Rowan Witt), a near-death experience and an unruly gang of spectres. They include a 19th-century Irish publican, a 1980s aerobics instructor, a pompous colonialist, a gold rush miner, a socialite and a surprisingly sweet 1990s biker called Satan. Instead of the plague victims in the cellar we get, naturally enough, convicts. **Ben Dowell**

Summer of 76
Available now

Fifty years ago, Britain experienced one of the hottest summers on record. It no longer seems quite as much fun any more. This two-part retrospective is something of a grab-bag, bringing together a 2006 talking-heads chronicle of the heatwave's effect on British culture plus a documentary from the year itself about a working-class family, the Harrises, on a camping holiday in Scarborough. Search iPlayer and you will also find a 1976 *The World About Us* nature documentary about that year's ladybird invasion and the intense heat's impact on the countryside.

Folk Aduaidh
Available now

Hidden gem

The title translates as "Folk from the north", meaning the north of Ireland, and this exquisitely assembled three-part documentary from 2015 goes deep into the roots of folk music in Ulster, taking us from the late 1700s to the (relative) present day. Inevitably, the civil rights struggle and the Troubles feature heavily. Yet this is a series that is as much about union as conflict and the footage, whether it's a slightly wary-looking Donovan performing at the 1980 Belfast Folk Festival or working-class families singing Gaelic folk songs in their front rooms is a delight to behold.

Netflix

Alley Cats
Available Friday

New series

Ricky Gervais has complimented Netflix on its willingness to commission his latest project based on a scant pitch: "It's cats, and they swear." The scabrous gang of Hanna-Barbera-style cartoon cats are played by his preferred ensemble. Indeed one rather suspects the whole show is a ruse to assemble his favourite people and enjoy riffing filthily off a skeleton script, and the tone is late 1990s post-pub. Joining Gervais, as the voice of Gus, are Kerry Godliman (Lara), Diane Morgan (Olive), Tom Basden (Ponce), David Earl (Puke) and Andrew Brooke (Fang).

The scrappy feline heroes of Ricky Gervais's Alley Cats

One Hundred Years of Solitude
Available Wednesday

Series return

Picking up where season one left off, with the death of José Arcadio Buendía and Colonel Aureliano Buendía saved from death-by-firing-squad, this second and final part of this epic, Spanish-language adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez's 1967 magical realist masterpiece continues at the same stately pace. This time the muggy opulence has been replaced by a mood of desolate valediction. Importantly, the show continues to be strange and unsettling, reworking the clichés of the historical family saga in many subtle ways.

Death Inc
Available Friday

Since it premiered in 2024 this Spanish-language black comedy, set within a funeral home, has become a cult hit. Much of the praise has been directed towards the chemistry between Ascen López as Nieves, the widow of the deceased former owner, and the brilliant Carlos Areces who plays her late husband's former assistant, Dámaso Carrillo, a man who believes he was the rightful heir to the company. A modern Iago, Carillo is a truly great comic creation and with this, the fourth and final season, it will be fascinating to see if and how he receives his comeuppance.

more streaming next page ▶

Channel 4

Carpe Diem
Available Friday

Walter Presents

If you can overlook the uninspiring title, which appears to have little to do with the show, this French-language crime procedural (also showing on More4) is a delight. Samuel Le Bihan stars as roguish ex-con Tom Villeneuve, free after serving 17 years for murdering his wife and now working as a solicitor amid the seedy seaside glamour of Nice. On the surface this might all seem rather familiar, but the show's mix of convincing subsidiary characters plus its feel for the authentic culture and racial mix of the French Riviera is authentically beguiling.

Samuel Le Bihan stars in the French drama Carpe Diem

The Last Settlerment
Available now

Everyone agrees that David (Golo Euler) died too soon, struck down by cancer at 49. But when a letter is read out at the funeral it accuses his extended family of inflicting emotional wounds that hastened his death. Blame spreads and through flashbacks we discover that the malignancy is historic and wide-reaching. Another top pick from Walter Presents, this expertly structured drama benefits from a strong ensemble cast and a beautifully balanced narrative that reveals its secrets gradually and with a dark relish.

FILM: Jason and the Argonauts U, 1963
Available now

This adaptation of a particularly colourful chunk of Greek mythology represents the *Citizen Kane* of stop-motion animation. The driving talent behind this rip-roaring romp is the great special effects genius and stop-motion pioneer Ray Harryhausen. Jason (Todd Armstrong) goes on a quest for the Golden Fleece. Highlights include a giant statue come to life, the seven-headed hydra and an army of skeletons. (104min)

● Previews by Andrew Male, John Dugdale, Victoria Segal, Joe Clay, Ben Dowell

Now

The Five Star Weekend
Available now

Binge watch

In this eight-part drama based on a 2023 novel by Elin Hilderbrand, Jennifer Garner plays food blogger Hollis, who invites four female friends from different phases of her life to her lavish holiday home in Nantucket after her husband's death. But instead of lying around in stained jogging bottoms and crying she makes them rustic gift baskets and elegant food platters decorated with jars of wildflowers. This is grief curated and repackaged as an aspirational "girls" spa weekend. Preventing it from getting too saccharine is Chloë Sevigny as Hollis's sullen friend.

Jennifer Garner and the cast of The Five Star Weekend

Station Eleven
Available now

Based on the bestselling 2014 sci-fi novel by Emily St John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (first shown on Starzplay in 2022) is a post-apocalyptic drama in which a flu pandemic leads to the collapse of civilisation. It begins in the present when an actor, played by Gael García Bernal, collapses on stage during a performance of *King Lear*. The action unfolds through the eyes of Jeevan (Himesh Patel), who is at the theatre when the actor dies. We follow his frantic dash across New York, a child actor in tow, as it becomes clear that a fatal pandemic is sweeping the globe.

FILM: Matilda PG, 1996
Available now

Danny DeVito directs, narrates and co-stars in this adaptation of Roald Dahl's children's classic. The screen novice Mara Wilson is well cast as the young heroine, a smart schoolgirl who develops psychokinetic abilities and uses them to rebel against her uncaring parents, played by DeVito and his real-life wife Rhea Perlman, and the tyrannical headmistress Miss Trunchbull (Pam Ferris). *Matilda* is an atmospheric and quietly subversive attack on family values. *Matilda* was eventually turned into a stage musical, which in turn became a film in 2022. (98min)

Jamie Bell plays a Long Island farmer who becomes a spy

Best thriller

ITVX

Turn: Washington's Spies
Available now

George Washington's secret army of spies

Based on Alexander Rose's 2007 novel *Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring*, this thriller begins in October 1776, shortly after British victories, recapturing Long Island and the Port of New York for the Crown, leaving General George Washington's army in dire straits. Jamie Bell plays a Long Island farmer who becomes entangled in America's struggle for independence. Plots hatch, creeks turn red with English blood, and a paranoid miasma hovers, helped by the glowering dual presence of Burn Gorman and Kevin McNally. It was originally shown on AMC and ran for four seasons, from 2014-17. **VS**

Doctor Odyssey
Available now

Cancelled after just one season, Ryan Murphy's cruise ship medical drama was roundly lambasted by critics. Yet its small coterie of dedicated fans revelled in the lunacy and crafted a number of compelling theories about what was really happening on the high-camp high-seas. The main one was that Dr Max Bankman (Joshua Jackson) wasn't really the Odyssey cruise ship's onboard physician but was in a coma after contracting Covid-19. Ridiculous, maybe, but if you watch the show from that perspective it becomes a dark-edged fever-dream rather than a far-fetched TV soap.

The Chase Around the World
Available now

Having mined ITV's quiz format with celebrity and family versions, expanded the number of Chasers to beat, moved them to YouTube to play and sent several on a US road trip, not to mention the adventures of Bradley Walsh and his son Barney, now the show goes global. Their first stop-off is Rome, with the Beast and the Governess instructing teams to cross the city answering quiz questions and solving puzzles before their final showdown. Other stops include Lisbon, Paris, Athens and Switzerland. It even has a snappy catchphrase — "The more you know, the further you go!"

Prime Video

Sterling Point
Available Wednesday

New series

If you are a fan of *Hart of Dixie*, *My Life With the Walter Boys* or any of those amiable series in which a big city-type finds themselves out-of-depth in small-town North America... well, guess what? Devised by the writer-director Megan Park with *The OC* creators Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage, this teen drama stars Ella Rubin as Annie Jacobson. Her life takes a turn when she inherits her mysterious late grandfather's island in Canada. Part young adult mystery, part romantic drama, it has a dry wit and some excellent performances.

Bo Bragason and Ella Rubin star in Sterling Point

FILM: Masters of the Universe 12A, 2026
Available now

In this attempt to reinvigorate Mattel's musclebound He-Man franchise, Nicholas Galitzine plays an emasculated HR flunky who is in reality a refugee from the planet Eternia, where he is a prince or god, or both. Once he finds his power sword, he erupts with manly muscles and returns home to kick some serious ass. He-Man's quarry is the arch-villain Skeletor, played by Jared Leto, while Idris Elba is boozy bodyguard Duncan. A box office flop, it's having a second life on streaming, where it hit No 1 on the Prime Video movie chart. (141min)

The Falklands Play
Available now

In 1983, following his well-received dramas about Churchill and the Suez crisis, Ian Curteis was asked by the BBC to write a play about the policy decisions that led to the Falklands conflict. The resulting drama was delayed and eventually dropped in 1987, with Curteis claiming a liberal bias within the BBC. This version, filmed in 2002 and starring Patricia Hodge as Margaret Thatcher, is pretty much the film he intended but it still caused controversy, being seen in some quarters as too positive about the Iron Lady and too critical of the Argentine junta.

The best of the rest

HBO Max

Monsters of God
Available Friday

The *Tiger King* director Eric Goode follows his first love — reptiles — into the dark underworld of exotic animal smuggling. He traces the evolution of the reptile trade over decades as it skirts the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and grows into a secretive, high-stakes world. The billion-dollar criminal enterprise is fuelled by eccentric collectors with an obsession for these creatures, driving many to push the boundaries of laws and environmental ethics. Goode also meets the animal law enforcement officers tracking the outlaws, drawing parallels with drug smuggling rings.

Monsters of God explores the illegal reptile trade

Tubi

Wentworth
Available now

A contemporary reimagining of *Prisoner: Cell Block H* (1979-86), the cult Australian drama, *Wentworth* is also set in a women's jail and initially focuses on Bea Smith (Danielle Cormack) and her rise to the top of the prison's hierarchy. It premiered in May 2013, two months before Netflix released *Orange Is the New Black*, which rather stole its thunder. While *Wentworth* is cheaper-looking, the themes are much the same and the leads' performances are not far behind those in the American show.

Pay-for film

Disclosure Day 12, 2026
Available from Sky Store, Prime Video and more

In Steven Spielberg's latest sci-fi behemoth, Emily Blunt leads a Brit-heavy cast that includes Josh O'Connor and Colin Firth. She plays a TV weather woman who acquires special abilities after an encounter with aliens.

Supergirl 12, 2026
Available from Sky Store, Prime Video and more

Milly Alcock is Kara Zor-El, the all-flying, building-hopping, laser-eyed cousin of the Man of Steel, who embarks on a revenge mission after her dog, Krypto, is poisoned.

Sport The best live viewing

The world's fastest-growing racket sport

Wondering why your local sports centre is building padel courts apace and why celebrities such as David Beckham rave about it? The event at Olympia marks the start of six days of elite padel competition and your chance to find out if you should try the fastest-growing racket sport. Arturo Coello of Spain and Agustín Tapia of Argentina, *right*, are the finest exponents of a simple discipline that requires ingenuity. **Alyson Rudd**

Live London Premier Padel
Thursday, TNT Sport 4, from 10am

SATURDAY 1

Live Commonwealth Games
TNT Sports 2, 8.30am/6pm
Day nine of the Games, which take place in Glasgow.

ITV Racing: Glorious Goodwood
ITV1, 1.15pm
The fifth and final day of the meeting, including feature race the Coral Stewards' Cup.

Live Tour de France Women
TNT Sport 1, 2.30pm
Coverage from the first stage of the Grand Tour race, a 137km route around Lausanne.

Live SPFL: Aberdeen v Hearts
Sky Main Event, 5.30pm
The Scottish Premiership match from Pittodrie.

The Hundred Live: London Spirit Men v Southern Brave Men
Sky Cricket, 6pm
The match from Lord's in London. Birmingham Phoenix Men v Welsh Fire Men from Edgbaston, Birmingham, is at 2.30pm, with the women's match starting at 11am.

SUNDAY 2

Live Shanghai Masters Snooker
TNT Sports 3, 7am/12.30pm
Coverage from the final, which takes place at Luwan Indoor Stadium in Shanghai.

Live The Women's Open Championship
Sky Golf, noon
Day four of the major from Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club in Lancashire.

Live Test Cricket: West Indies v Pakistan
TNT Sports 3, 3.30pm
The first day of the second and final Test in the series from Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad and Tobago.

Live SPFL: Hibernian v Motherwell
Sky Football, 4.30pm
The Scottish Premiership match from Easter Road.

MONDAY 3

The Hundred Live: Welsh Fire Men v Southern Brave Men
Sky Cricket, 6.30pm
The match from Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. The women's match between the same teams is at 2.30pm.

Live SPFL: Celtic v Dundee
Sky Main Event, 7.30pm
Coverage of the Scottish Premiership match from Celtic Park, as the champions get their campaign under way.

TUESDAY 4

Live Tour de France Women
TNT Sports 1, 2.30pm
The fourth stage of the race, a 21km individual time trial stage from Gevrey-Chambertin to Dijon.

West Indies' Justin Greaves (Sun, TNT Sports 1, 3.30pm)

WEDNESDAY 5

Live Tour de France Women
TNT Sports 1, 12.30pm
The fifth stage of the race, a 140km route from Macon to Belleville-en-Beaujolais.

The Hundred Live: Trent Rockets Men v Birmingham Phoenix Men
BBC2, 6.30pm
The match from Trent Bridge in Nottingham. The women's match between the same teams is at 2.30pm.

THURSDAY 6

The Hundred Live: London Spirit Men v MI London Men
Sky Main Event, 6.30pm
The match from Lord's in London. The women's match between the same teams is at 2.30pm.

Live Super League: St Helens v Hull FC
Sky Action, 8pm
The match from the 22nd round of fixtures, which takes place at BrewDog Stadium.

FRIDAY 7

The Hundred Live: Birmingham Phoenix Men v Sunrisers Leeds Men
Sky Main Event, 6.30pm
The match from Edgbaston, Birmingham. The women's match between the same teams is at 2.30pm.

EFL Cup Live: Middlesbrough v Wrexham
ITV1, 7.30pm
Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the first-round tie at the Riverside Stadium.

Podcasts

Michelangelo's papal punch-up — and other great art anecdotes

James Marriott on a series that makes you want to rush to a gallery right away

Stories of Art
Available on Spotify, Apple and more

Art historians have generated some of the most meaningless babble known to man (try reading the pretentious labels in a gallery), but also some of the best broadcasting (Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation*, John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, Robert Hughes's *The Shock of the New*). In 2026 the babble has never been worse, as anyone who has visited Tate Britain lately will tell you, but art broadcasting is enjoying an unexpected miniature golden age. I've raved here before about my love for Waldemar Januszczak and Bendor Grosvenor's podcast *Waldy and Bendy's Adventures in Art*, but fans of that show haven't had a new episode to listen to since April. There is — thank goodness — a great show to fill the gap.

Stories of Art is hosted by the art historian James Fox and the art critic Alastair Sooke. It is fantastic: deeply researched, authoritative and passionate. There are episodes on David Hockney, Frida Kahlo and Hans Holbein. A good way in is their series on Michelangelo. Like Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook, who invented the narrative-driven two-hander podcast, Sooke and Fox know how to tell a story. For instance, we get Julius II and Michelangelo fighting on the scaffolding of the Sistine Chapel. The furious Pope, desperate to have his painting finished, starts "beating [Michelangelo] with his staff and threatens to throw him off the scaffold". We've all felt that way about painters and decorators.

They are vivid on the physical agony Michelangelo endured while painting the ceiling. He did not paint lying on his back, as in popular imagination, but standing upright with his neck cricked upwards. For a long time after, if he wanted to read letters, he had to hold them above his head. And Michelangelo was no lone genius. If you were to walk into the chapel as Michelangelo began work you would find "four painting assistants" as well as rope makers, scaffold builders and plasterers. The scene would have been rather like "a

Alastair Sooke and James Fox

construction site today", with "maybe as many as a dozen men laughing, joking, making things, building things, fixing the ceiling". Don't expect Waldy and Bendy-style raucous fun, but Fox and Sooke can be witty. I enjoyed their description of Julius II looking like "a miserable Father Christmas" in Raphael's portrait.

They are even better on the art. Some art programming tends to pile on the anecdotes and jokes, suggesting nervousness about how much an audience will enjoy hearing the presenter gushing about chiaroscuro and or the details of impasto. Fox and Sooke dive in with enthusiasm. Many people assume that God's finger is touching Adam's in Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*. In fact, "they're 1.9cm apart". God has not quite yet given life to man. This is the secret of Michelangelo's genius, they say. He "often chooses the moment before", which is "pregnant with excitement and... suspense that the moment *of* and the moment *after* just simply don't have". His sculpture of David — who has not yet loosed his sling — uses the same trick.

I love the authority of Fox and Sooke's judgments, which many listeners will surely enjoy passing off as their own. In their episode on the ancient Egyptian bust of Nefertiti (an excuse to explore the artistic revolution unleashed by the pharaoh Akhenaten) they note that Egyptian art "gets a bit of a bad rep for being too formal, too stiff". But you have to understand that it is "idealising": "Egyptian artists were not trying to depict the world as they actually saw it; they were trying to capture the essence of things."

Their authority makes their enthusiasm feel earned, not like empty blather. In the episode on Vermeer, Fox enthuses that "at his best his paintings are some of the most beautiful objects a human being has ever made... Remarkable," he exclaims. "Remarkable." You will want to rush out to the gallery to see for yourself.

Explore. Plan. And now book with The Times.

The Times and Sunday Times is a unique and trusted source of travel inspiration. Now you can trust us to take you there too.

Call 0808 231 5090 or visit thetimes.com/holidays

TIMES Holidays

Films

What movies to watch or record on television this week

Saturday August 1

A Star Is Born 15, 1976
BBC2, 10.10pm

The second remake of the 1937 film (following 1954's musical starring Judy Garland and James Mason) stars Kris Kristoffersen as a booze-sozzled has-been rocker, who propels an unknown club singer (Barbra Streisand) to superstardom as his career spirals into decline. The film was made for Streisand, but it was Kristofferson's career that benefited — his performance won him a Golden Globe and an epiphany: seeing his own death from drink in the picture made Kristofferson drop his bottle-and-a-half-a-day bourbon habit. (139min)

Musical drama

Kris Kristofferson and Barbra Streisand in A Star Is Born

Meet Me in St Louis
U, 1944
BBC2, 1.50pm

What better time to watch this definitive yuletide classic than, er, August? Directed by Vincente Minnelli, *Meet Me in St Louis* is a ruthless tearjerker about a year in the life of a close-knit Missouri family who are facing the prospect of a move to New York City. The standout numbers include *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*, but the emotional power is in the central performance of Judy Garland. Her fiercely loving and protective heroine, Esther, and her on-off romance with the loveable boy next door are the core of the film. (112min)

Casino Royale 15, 2006
ITV1, 8pm

Daniel Craig brings a brutally efficient physicality and thrilling undercurrent of sadistic cruelty to the role — his is a Bond that you feel gains job satisfaction from his licence to kill. The action is less reliant on the sillier gadgets favoured in the Brosnan era. Instead the film stakes its reputation on one formidable weapon: Craig's ruthless, reckless 007, who looks as though he could do some serious damage, makes catastrophic errors of judgment and loses his cool. Mads Mikkelsen is the baddie Le Chiffre; Eva Green is the vampish Vesper Lynd. (145min)

The Long Good Friday
18, 1980
ITV4, 9.15pm

This hard-bitten tale of Mob vendettas is rooted in 1980s Britain. Harold Shand (Bob Hoskins) is a gangster, but he's smart enough to realise that there's money in property. He's the advance guard of the army of speculators who marched into London during the Thatcher era. The juxtaposition of Shand's yacht with the meat wholesalers and the carcasses of the dock buildings encapsulates a city about to change beyond recognition. With Helen Mirren as Shand's mistress, it's an unmissable film. (114min)

Family adventure

Superman
PG, 1978
Saturday, BBC2, 5.40pm

The original and the best superhero

In this era of wall-to-wall spandex saviours it's easy to forget that the superhero movie came of age nearly half a century ago with *Superman*. You want an inspiring hero? Christopher Reeve — who beat Arnold Schwarzenegger and, erm, Neil Diamond to the role — had the looks, grace and, as Clark Kent, comic timing. Marquee stars? Gene Hackman and Marlon Brando. Dazzling effects? This was a pre-digital triumph of scale models, matt paintings and Reeve on a wire. Plus, John Williams's score knocks its counterparts into orbit. (137min) **Ed Potton**

Monday August 3

Doctor in the House
PG, 1954
Talking Pictures TV, 5.05pm

The first of many screen outings for Richard Gordon's *Doctor* books was the most commercially successful British hit of 1954, a phenomenon the film-makers attributed to its irreverence towards the medical profession. A trainee surgeon, Simon Sparrow (Dirk Bogarde), joins the new student intake at St Swithin's hospital, only to fall foul of the imperious Sir Lancelot Spratt (James Robertson Justice), a character largely responsible for the stereotypical view of consultants ever since. The casts includes Kenneth More and Donald Sinden. (92min)

Twister 12, 1996
Film4, 9pm

Best action

Bill Paxton and Helen Hunt go stormchasing in this action blockbuster full of incredible effects, directed by Jan de Bont (*Speed*). Hunt plays Jo Thornton, a tornado-obsessed meteorologist leading a team of storm chasers, with Paxton as her estranged husband, Bill Harding, a former storm chaser turned TV weatherman. Harding has travelled to Oklahoma with his fiancée, Melissa (Jami Gertz), to obtain Jo's signature on their divorce papers. Instead he is quickly pulled back into the high-octane world of storm chasing as terrifying tornadoes begin to form across the countryside. (113min)

Sing Sing 15, 2024
BBC2, 11.05pm

Colman Domingo was Oscar nominated for his part in Greg Kwedar's powerful drama about a theatre group at New York's high-security prison, which once forbade its inmates even to speak. Domingo plays John "Divine G" Whitfield, a founding member of the group who is a published writer on the outside, incarcerated for a crime he didn't commit. The film casts many real-life inmates alongside the actors to forge authenticity. If you find it hard to tell who are the violent offenders and who are the actors, the film is working its magic. (106min)

Tuesday August 4

My Stepmother Is an Alien
15, 1988
Film4, 9pm

Cosmic slapstick starring Dan Aykroyd as Dr Steven Mills, a bumbling astrophysicist (and widower) who accidentally disrupts the gravity of a distant alien planet. To investigate, the aliens send a beautiful extraterrestrial, Celeste (Kim Basinger), to seduce him and steal his research, although ultimately they fall in love. Most of the humour derives from Celeste efforts to pretend that she is human, such as struggling with simple tasks like cooking, while also eating the acid out of batteries and pulling eggs out of boiling water with her bare hands. (104min)

Robin Hood 12, 2010
BBC1, 10.40pm

The director Ridley Scott reunites with Russell Crowe for a revisionist take on the Robin Hood myth that favours dark and convoluted plotting and a whole lot of violence and betrayal. Crowe is a brooding Robin Longstride, an archer in Richard the Lionheart's army. Richard is played by Danny Huston, so you know that he has to be a cad. Sure enough, he double-crosses Robin and his cohorts, who desert. But Robin's real foe is Godfrey (Mark Strong), a French agent working in the name of King John, but stirring unrest among the English populace. (140min)

Scarlett Johansson in Jonathan Glazer's Under the Skin

Under the Skin
15, 2013
Film4, 11.15pm

Cult sci-fi

In Jonathan Glazer's extraordinary adaptation of Michel Faber's novel, Scarlett Johansson stalks through the film as the woman who fell to Earth and Scotland's provincial city centres are redrawn as alien worlds. It's a film told almost entirely through striking images and sound. Dialogue is often degraded until it becomes just noise. This is formally adventurous film-making as Johansson's alien hunter is a cold-eyed predator scouring the chaos of the streets for her next target. It's disturbing, beautiful and impossible to forget. (108min)

Wednesday August 5

The Illusionist PG, 2006
Sky Cinema Drama, 6.05pm

Edward Norton stars as the late 19th-century illusionist Eisenheim, who gets himself in a bit of a pickle in Vienna when he meets his childhood sweetheart (Jessica Biel) after 15 years and wins back her heart. The snag is that she is betrothed to the Crown Prince Leopold (Rufus Sewell). Centred on Eisenheim's tricks, the film is full of smoke and mirrors, in every sense, and never sags thanks to the quality of the cast. Paul Giamatti is typically superb as the policeman on Eisenheim's trail; look out also for a young Eleanor Tomlinson (aka *Poldark*'s Demelza). (110min)

Speed 15, 1991
Film4, 9pm

Best thriller

Jan de Bont's bomb-on-a-bus thriller goes from nought to 50mph in a matter of seconds and keeps accelerating. The premise is simple: Keanu Reeves is Jack

Christopher Reeve as Superman

You're Cordially Invited 15, 2024
Wednesday, BBC1, 10.40pm

Best comedy

A side-splitting comedy

The writer-director Nicholas Stoller has taken an exhausted genre (the wedding comedy) and brought the whole thing to vivid, side-splitting life. Reese Witherspoon and Will Ferrell play the antagonists of a weekend wedding nightmare that occurs when two fraught nuptials are accidentally booked for the same date, on the same tiny, alligator-infested island in Georgia. Ferrell plays the dad of the first bride, while Witherspoon is the alpha sister of the second bride. The gag-per-minute ratio is staggering. (109min) **Ed Potton**

Will Ferrell and Reese Witherspoon

Sunday August 2

Loch Ness PG, 1994
BBC2, 12.35pm

Hidden gem

A hugely watchable family film in which the myth of Loch Ness is used to set up an irresistible tale of redemption. Ted Danson is an American scientist dispatched to the loch to carry out a search that will put to bed the idea of Nessie once and for all. His professional reputation is a joke, his personal life a non-starter, but as he becomes closer to his wary landlady (Joely Richardson) and her nine-year-old daughter, could there be a surprise in the offing? This is not a film about cute monsters, more about a man rediscovering his priorities in life. (101min)

Shakespeare In Love 15, 1998
BBC2, 10pm

The Bard (Joseph Fiennes) is young, penniless and, most important, suffering from a terrible case of writer's block. Unfortunately his equally broke benefactor Philip Henslowe (Geoffrey Rush) has staked his theatre on Shakespeare's next play, Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter. Viola de Lesseps, a young aristocratic woman (Gwyneth Paltrow) posing as a man to win a role in the play, could be just the thing to stir Shakespeare's creative juices. Tom Stoppard's script is a playful delight. (122min)

Paul McGann and Richard E Grant in Withnail & I

Withnail & I 15, 1987
Film4, 11.40pm

"We want the finest wines available to humanity, we want them here, and we want them now!" If ever the spirit of a film could be summed up in one line, it is this demand from Richard E Grant's raddled "resting" actor Withnail. Paul McGann plays "I", an equally unemployed thespian who joins Withnail on an ill-fated holiday to the countryside. The outpouring of grief after the death of Richard Griffiths in 2013 was largely generated by his performance here as Uncle Monty. A cult classic that deserves every accolade it has received. (105min)

Traven, a Swat officer who incurs the wrath of Dennis Hopper's secretive extortionist, Howard Payne, who uses rigged explosives to demand a ransom. After his latest plot is foiled, Payne presents Traven with the biggest challenge of his career — a city bus wired to blow sky high if the speedometer drops below 50mph. Behind the wheel is Annie Porter (Sandra Bullock), a passenger on the doomed bus. (113min)

Downhill 12, 2020
Film4, 2am

In this US version of the European arthouse film *Force Majeure* — the skiing holiday black comedy by the Swedish director Ruben Ostlund — Pete (Will Ferrell) and Billie (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) are at an alfresco restaurant in Austria with their two sons. An avalanche hits. Mum protects the kids. Dad scarpers. The snow settles. Everyone's OK. Well, physically at least. It's a deliciously uncomfortable scenario. Tapping into themes of masculinity, midlife crisis and selfishness, it's meat and drink for Jesse Armstrong (*Succession*), who co-wrote the script. (86min)

Thursday August 6

The Electrical Life of Louis Wain 12, 2021
Film4, 6.45pm

Benedict Cumberbatch plays the Victorian artist Louis Wain, who made it his life's mission to capture the beauty of the world to honour the memory of his prematurely departed wife, Emily (Claire Foy). That relationship, like everything else in the film, co-written and directed by Will Sharpe, unfolds via a strangely self-conscious and helter-skelter dash. It follows Wain's life from early scribbler to famous sketcher of cat cartoons to eventual resident of a London psychiatric hospital. The dream scenes are nicely done and cat enthusiasts will be thrilled. (111min)

Women Talking 15, 2022
BBC2, 11.05pm

Written and directed by Sarah Polley, this film is rooted in a real-life atrocity that occurred in an ultraconservative Mennonite community in Bolivia between 2005 and 2009. A group of nine men drugged and raped on a mass scale, spraying livestock tranquillisers into the homes of their victims at night before attacking them. Polley doesn't attempt to recreate the assaults on camera. Instead she punctuates the film with flashbacks to the moments after the assaults. A fine cast includes Claire Foy, Rooney Mara, Jessie Buckley, Frances McDormand and Ben Whishaw. (104min)

Dance with a Stranger 15, 1984
Film4, 11.40pm

Factual drama

Mike Newell's drama about Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, launched the careers of Miranda Richardson and Rupert Everett. Richardson won best actress at the Evening Standard British Film awards for her portrayal of Ellis, a former nude model and prostitute who manages a London drinking den. There she meets David Blakely (Everett), a handsome playboy racing driver, and they embark on a doomed relationship that leads to the ultimate crime of passion and Ellis's fate and place in British history. (96min)

Friday August 7

Heretic 15, 2024
Sky Cinema Premiere, 8pm

Movie premiere

A superb Hugh Grant turns villainous as Mr Reed, a man welcoming two young missionaries into his cavernous house to discuss their religious doctrines. They first suspect something is up when his wife doesn't join them — church rules forbid them to be in a room with a man who is not accompanied by another woman. Then, out of nowhere, Reed tells them, "The walls and ceiling have metal in them. I hope that's OK." Then things get much, much worse and the girls find themselves trapped in a psychological game of terror. (111min)

28 Days Later 18, 2002
BBC1, 10.45pm

Danny Boyle's sensational reimagining of the zombie film owes more to John Wyndham than it does to George A Romero. The opening is pure *Day of the Triffids* as a bicycle courier (Cillian Murphy) awakes from a coma to find St Thomas' Hospital trashed and London deserted. The zombies are terrifying. No lumbering brain-chompers these, but 100mph rage-infected terrors. A sequel, *28 Weeks Later*, followed in 2007, with further instalments, *28 Years Later* (2025) and *28 Years Later: The Bone Temple* (2026). (108min)

Hugh Grant conducts a psychological game of terror in Heretic

Hoard 18, 2023
BBC2, 11.05pm

Set in the Eighties and Nineties, *Hoard* is the story of the traumatised free spirit Maria. The first part details the close, riotously creative relationship between young Maria (Lily-Beau Leach) and her loose cannon mother (Hayley Squires). The second finds the unruly teenage Maria (Saura Lightfoot Leon) living with a more conventional foster mother, Michelle (Samantha Spiro), getting high and becoming fascinated by Michael, Michelle's 29-year-old former charge (Joseph Quinn). This is a thrilling fever dream. (126min)

● **Previews by Kevin Maher, Ed Potton, Wendy Ide, Joe Clay**

Saturday 1

★ Picks of the day

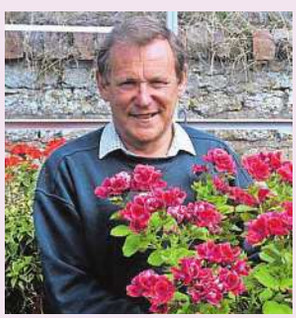
Dictator: The Hitler Interviews
Channel 4, 9pm

How Harvard cheerleaders inspired Hitler

"What first attracted you to Adolf Hitler?" may sound like the question Mrs Merton famously asked Paul Daniels's wife, Debbie McGee, but here it is directed at Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, the financier who helped the Nazi leader's rise to power. There is something grimly fascinating in this rich archive of interviews with people who knew the dictator intimately, and the aim — to understand populism in our own age of strongmen — is not subtle. But the material, much of which has never been broadcast, is jaw-dropping. We know about Hitler's charisma but Hanfstaengl (who lived in the US for a time) reveals that he taught Hitler a few lessons about inspiring people from his accounts of Harvard University's football song. **Ben Dowell**

Monty Don Remembers: Geoff Hamilton BBC4, 8pm

There's no one better than Monty Don to deliver a tribute to the much-loved Geoff Hamilton, presenter of *Gardeners' World* from 1979 until his untimely death in 1996 and known as "the nation's head gardener". Don, who inherited the *Gardeners' World* mantle in 2003, reflects warmly on Hamilton's early career while getting to the heart of what made him stand out from his predecessors. This includes his preparedness to show his failures as well as his successes, and his constant reminders that gardens can be created on any budget. This is followed by two episodes of *Gardeners' World* featuring Hamilton (8.20pm/8.50pm, BBC4)



Remembered: the beloved gardener and broadcaster Geoff Hamilton

and at 9.20pm *Geoff Hamilton: A Man and his Garden*, a 1998 tribute that visits his plot in Barnsdale, Leicestershire. **BD**

Bolero at the Proms BBC2, 7.55pm

If your idea of a summer night involves sweaty brass and fiery rhythms overseen by Nick Mohammed, the Spanish National Orchestra's Proms debut is a must. The German conductor David Afkham treats us to Falla's sun-drenched *The Three-Cornered Hat* and Rodrigo's gorgeous *Concierto de Aranjuez* with the guitarist Rafael Aguirre. Then comes Ravel's *Boléro*, that nagging drumbeat familiar to Torvill and Dean fans. **BD**

Barbra Streisand: Becoming an Icon BBC2, 9.10pm

Before Babs was Babs, she was just a brainy Brooklyn kid with big dreams and zero desire to go to college. Armed with sheer determination and a talent that could knock down walls, the 16-year-old Streisand set her sights on Broadway. Acting was the goal but once she opened her mouth to sing at 18? Well, we know. This traces her early rise and glass-ceiling shattering, and explores how she rewrote the Hollywood playbook. **BD**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
10.00 Saturday Kitchen
11.30 Anna Haugh's Big Irish Food Tour From Sligo (r)
12.00 pm Homes Under the Hammer Properties sold at auction (r)
1.00 BBC News; Weather
1.15 Bargain Hunt (r)
2.00 Money for Nothing (r)
3.00 Escape to the Country (r)
3.55 FILM Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian (PG, 2009) Fantasy comedy sequel starring Ben Stiller
5.35 BBC News
5.45 BBC Regional News; Weather
5.55 The Hit List Celebrity Special With Chloe Burrows, Aitch, Gladiators Sabre and Nitro, Lisa Riley and Dominic Brunt
6.40 Alan Carr's Picture Slam With contestants from Lancashire, Birmingham and Cardiff

Superstar DJ Calvin Harris (10pm)

7.25 Michael McIntyre's Big Show Holly Willoughby plays Remember Me, and Perrie Edwards is woken up for a Midnight Gameshow (6/6) (r)
8.25 Pointless Celebrities Contestants include James Jordan, Gemma Collins and Brian McFadden (r)
9.10 How Are You? It's Alan (Partridge) Alan explores whether nature can heal a troubled mind (4/6) (r)
9.40 BBC News; Weather
10.00 Calvin Harris: Live from Scotland The DJ performs a homecoming show live from Glasgow's Hampden Park. Just 20 years after playing his first-ever gig to around 300 people at Glasgow's King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, the Dumfries-born artist transforms the country's national stadium into a giant open-air club for a career-spanning set in front of more than 50,000 fans
12.00 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.05 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Children's Programmes (r)
9.05 Gardeners' World (r)
10.05 FILM On the Waterfront (PG, 1954) Drama starring Marlon Brando (b/w)
11.50 The Great British Sewing Bee The contestants recycle T-shirts and make outfits with an eco-message (r)
12.50 pm A Cook Abroad: Rachel Khoo's Malaysia (r)
1.50 FILM Meet Me in St Louis (U, 1944) Musical, starring Judy Garland and Tom Drake
3.40 Fake or Fortune? (r)
4.40 Evolution (r)
5.40 FILM Superman (PG, 1978) A superpowered alien is evacuated from his doomed planet and crash-lands on Earth, becoming a crusader for justice. Adventure starring Christopher Reeve

The iconic Barbra Streisand (9.10pm)

7.55 Bolero at the Proms ★ Nick Mohammed presents music inspired by Iberian rhythms as the Spanish National Orchestra makes its Proms debut with works by Manuel De Falla, Maurice Ravel and Joaquín Rodrigo. **See Pick of the Day**
9.10 Barbra Streisand: Becoming an Icon ★ A look at the actress and singer's rise to stardom from her roots in working-class Brooklyn, and the achievements of her early career. **See Pick of the Day** (r)
10.10 FILM A Star Is Born (15, 1976) A talented rock star's career begins to wind down as he drifts into cynicism and hits the bottle. However, an encounter with a promising singer proves inspirational and he helps nurture her career. But as she climbs the road to stardom, he goes into an even greater decline. Remake of the musical starring Barbra Streisand, Kris Kristofferson, Paul Mazursky, Gary Busey and Marta Heflin
12.25 am Golf: Women's Open Highlights 2026 Action from day three of the Major
1.25 Sign Zone: Who Do You Think You Are? Actor Adeel Akhtar explores his ancestry (r) (SL)
2.25 The Rapture (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am James Martin's French Adventure (r)
6.30 James Martin's American Adventure (r)
7.25 Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh (r)
9.25 ITV News
9.30 James Martin's Saturday Morning (r)
12.00 pm Prue Leith's Cotswold Kitchen (r)
1.00 ITV News; Weather
1.15 Live ITV Racing: Glorious Goodwood Coverage of day five of the meeting, including the Coral Stewards' Cup
4.30 FILM Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (U, 2010) Fantasy comedy starring Emma Thompson and Maggie Gyllenhaal
6.30 ITV News; Weather
6.45 Regional News; Weather

James Bond film Casino Royale (8pm)

7.00 Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show as Zoe Ball takes on the Banker in the hope of winning money for her chosen charity
8.00 FILM Casino Royale (15, 2006) James Bond achieves his '00' status and is dispatched on the trail of Le Chiffre, an international criminal financing terrorist organisations around the world. Bond's investigation leads to a casino in Montenegro, where he takes part in a high-stakes poker game in a bid to bankrupt Le Chiffre and put an end to his plans. Spy thriller starring Daniel Craig, Eva Green and Mads Mikkelsen
10.40 ITV News
10.55 The Staircase As the DA's office attempts to solidify their case, shocking new details surface about Michael's past that threaten to derail the defence (3/8)
12.15 am Shop on TV
3.00 Cold Case Forensics: The Death of God's Banker (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Fern Britton: Inside the Vet's A cat is brought in with an injury from a fight (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.15** The Repair Shop on the Road (r) **8.00** Interior Design Masters with Alan Carr (r) **9.00** Sportscene: Premiership Highlights **9.30** Black Watch: A Soldier's Story. Examining the National Theatre of Scotland's play *Black Watch* (r) **10.30pm-Midnight** Black Watch. A performance of the National Theatre of Scotland's play (r)

BBC2 N Ireland 4.35pm Tartan Tales. Behind the scenes at the only kilt shop on the island of Ireland (r) **5.05-5.40pm** Barra's Return of the Wild. Barra Best travels to Munich. Last in the series (r) **BBC1 Scotland 12.00midnight** Sportscene (r)

Your seven-day radio listings guide

Pages 42-43

Kate Molleson on Talking Music
Today, Radio 3, 9.45pm

Channel 4

6.05 am Cheers Comedy (r)
7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.50 The Simpsons (r)
11.50 Frasier American sitcom (r)
1.50pm Four in a Bed (r)
2.20 Four in a Bed The B&Bers check in at Foxlow Grange in Buxton, Derbyshire (r)
2.50 Four in a Bed The B&Bers head to self-catering cottages in Carmarthenshire (r)
3.20 Four in a Bed The final visit of the week is to Tedstone Log Cabins in Herefordshire (r)
3.50 Four in a Bed The owners discover who offers the best value for money (r)
4.20 The Dog House A girl with Tourette's needs a special pup to stand by her side (r)
5.25 FILM **The Lost City (12, 2022)** Adventure starring Sandra Bullock and Channing Tatum

Denzel Washington stars (10pm)

7.30 Channel 4 News

8.00 Hitler's Games: Berlin 1936 In Colour Colourised footage of the 1936 Olympics, held in Nazi Germany, revealing the stories of the Games

9.00 Dictator: The Hitler Interviews New series. The personal testimonies of those who met and knew Adolf Hitler. **See Pick of the Day** (1/3)

10.00 FILM **American Gangster (18, 2007)** The story of 1970s drug kingpin Frank Lucas, whose innovative methods of smuggling heroin into the US made him one of the leading figures in the New York underworld. A detective is assigned to bring Lucas's empire down, but his investigation is undermined by police corruption. Fact-based crime drama starring Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe

12.50 am Ramy 2.00 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **2.50 The Simpsons** (r)
4.05 Couples Come Dine with Me (r) (SL) **4.55 Location, Location, Location** (r)
5.50 Cheers Comedy (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.00 Entertainment News on 5
9.10 Commonwealth Games 2026 Highlights (r)
10.00 Secrets of the Royal Palaces Double bill (r)
12.00 pm Secrets of the Royal Gardens (r)
1.00 The Royals: Uncensored
2.00 Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild Spring arrives (r)
3.00 Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild Cold weather causes problems for animals (r)
4.00 Live UK's Strongest Man 2026 Coverage of day one from Planet Ice Milton Keynes, featuring Group A, with reigning champion Paul Flynn and three-time title-winner Paul Smith among those set to be involved
6.55 5 News Weekend

Inside Meghan's mind (8pm)

7.00 Sussex: Jewel of the South Coast The Rev Vanessa from Chichester shares her efforts to preserve the Cathedral and a lifeguard from Brighton has a rough time on a summer Bank Holiday (2/5)

8.00 Meghan Markle: Inside the Mind of a Duchess Psychologists, psychiatrists and branding experts try to unpick the Duchess of Sussex's psychology (r)

9.00 Harry & Meghan: Royal Hypocrites? A look at allegations against the Duke and Duchess of Sussex of hypocrisy and double standards, examining whether they are just victims of press persecution (r)

10.30 Commonwealth Games 2026 Highlights from the ninth day in Glasgow, which saw gold medals awarded in boxing, athletics and para athletics, plus track cycling and para track cycling

11.30 Scandal: The Major-Currie Affair John Major and Edwina Currie's affair (r)

1.00 am Cruise TV (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Motorway Cops (r)
3.45 Friends (r)
4.35 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows (r) (SL)

12.30am Weather for the Week Ahead **12.35-6.00am** BBC News. Headlines STV **1.15-4.30pm** Live STV Racing: Glorious Goodwood. Coverage of day five of the meeting **12.15-3.00am** Shop on TV **3.50-5.05am** Unwind with STV

S4C **3.00pm** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **6.45** News **7.00** Am Dro! **8.00** Live Gemau'r Gymanwlad: Y Ras i Glasgow. Coverage of the ninth and penultimate day of the Commonwealth Games **10.30** Eigra (r) **11.00-11.35** Stiwdio24/7 (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Planet Earth: A Monkey's Tale
7.05 Life on Earth Reptiles (7/13)
8.00 Monty Don Remembers: Geoff Hamilton A tribute to the former presenter. **See Pick of the Day**
8.20 Gardeners' World Memories of host Geoff Hamilton. **See Pick of the Day**
8.50 Gardeners' World Building a propagator. **See Pick of the Day**
9.20 Geoff Hamilton: A Man and His Garden: The Barnsdale Story The gardener's Barnsdale plot. **See Pick of the Day** (2/5)
9.50 The Sentinels The team experience a serious setback (7/8)
10.30 The Sentinels Irène is forced to halt her investigation (8/8)
11.15 Keeping Up Appearances
11.45-12.15am One Foot in the Grave (S2, ep6)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

2.00 pm Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates a murder at a prestigious golf club (S12, ep1)
4.00 Midsomer Murders Barnaby's secret past as a spy is revealed (S12, ep3)
6.00 Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates art forgery (S12, ep2)
8.00 Midsomer Murders A teacher is killed in a hit-and-run, and Barnaby suspects the intended target was a Midsomer University science fellow (S12, ep4)
10.00 Vera A body is dredged up from a slurry pit on a remote farm and Vera must connect the dots between the victim and a wounded illegal immigrant working there
11.50-2.00am Inspector Morse John Thaw stars (S4, ep2)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm Doctor Who
9.00 Not Going Out
9.30 Not Going Out
9.55 Mrs Brown's Boys
10.25 Mrs Brown's Boys
10.55 Ghosts Australia Kate's mother invites herself to move in
11.20 Ghosts Australia
11.45-12.05am Schitt's Creek

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

11.00am Live The Hundred: Birmingham Phoenix Women v Welsh Fire Women
2.00pm Live The Hundred: Birmingham Phoenix Men v Welsh Fire Men
5.15 Live SPFL: Aberdeen v Hearts (Kick-off **5.30**)
8.00-11.00 Live Tennis
11.30-3.30am Live Tennis

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm Discovering: Clint Eastwood A look at the life and career of the actor and director
3.00 FILM **The African Queen (PG, 1951)** Romantic adventure starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn
5.00 Katharine Hepburn: Call Me Kate Profile
7.00 Pink Floyd: A Delicate Sound of Thunder A concert film from the musicians' A Momentary Lapse of Reason tour in 1988
9.25 Pink Floyd: The Endless River A visual interpretation of the band's 2014 album, filmed in London and Exmoor National Park
10.30-12.10am Pink Floyd: Live at Pompeii A 1972 concert by the prog rock band filmed amid the ruins of the Italian city

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.40 pm The Professionals CI5 uncovers a plan to demand the release of a prisoner
2.50 Hornblower Despite his reservations, Hornblower agrees to marry Maria, but is sent to France to locate Captain Bracegirdle (2/2)
4.55 Sharpe Hakeswill creates more mischief for Sharpe
7.05 Sharpe The soldier becomes a pawn in a French plot, and finds himself facing execution for murder
9.15 FILM **The Long Good Friday (18, 1980)** A London crime lord tries to extend his empire, but finds himself foiled at every turn by rivals keen to see the end of his reign. Thriller starring Bob Hoskins
11.35-1.35am All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

6.25pm FILM **Mission: Impossible: Ghost Protocol (12, 2011)** Action adventure sequel starring Tom Cruise
9.00 FILM **John Wick (15, 2014)** Action thriller starring Keanu Reeves, Willem Dafoe and Michael Nyqvist
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

2.30pm Live Tour de France Women The first stage
5.45 Live FIM Speedway Grand Prix
9.00 Cycling World Tour
10.00 Cycling Pro Series
11.00 Playing for Our Future
11.15 MLB Highlights
12.15am-3.00 Live MLB
4.00-7.00 Live AFL

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm A Place in the Sun Spain's southern Costa Blanca
2.40 A Place in the Sun Property in Malaga
3.40 Come Dine with Me A week of dinner parties in Essex
6.20 Four in a Bed
6.55 Four in a Bed
7.25 Four in a Bed
7.55 Four in a Bed
8.30 Four in a Bed
9.00 24 Hours in A&E A 75-year-old is treated after a suspected heart attack, and an 85-year-old arrives on the ward after falling at home
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A schoolboy is brought in after being hit by a car, and doctors are concerned he may have suffered a bleed on the brain
11.05-12.10am 999: On the Front Line Paramedics are called to a man with chest pains

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.50 pm New Tricks A DNA sample from a teenager provides a link to a killer
3.10 New Tricks Danny investigates the death of a modern-day Miss Marple
4.30 Miss Marple: They Do It with Mirrors The sleuth investigates a murder at a country house (S3, ep3)
7.00 The Brokenwood Mysteries The theft of a family heirloom leaves Ray and Trudy Neilson with blood on their hands (S12, ep6)
9.00 The Count of Monte Cristo Edmond reveals to Villefort that Heloise stole the vial of poison from him (8/8)
10.10 Outrageous News of Unity's encounter with Hitler shocks the Mitfords (4/6)
11.10-12.45am The Last Detective (S3, ep4)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
8.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
9.00 Bangers & Cash Derek collects an Opel Manta
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A VW Golf

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.35pm The Gilded Age Period drama (S3, ep7&8)
9.00 The Five-Star Weekend Hollis finds out Caroline's secret (5/8)
9.55 The Five-Star Weekend Drama (6/8)
10.40 All Her Fault (3/8)
11.40-12.40am Homicide: Life on the Street

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.40 pm Miracle on 34th Street (U, 1994) Christmas family drama remake, with Richard Attenborough
3.55 Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (U, 1961) Sci-fi adventure starring Walter Pidgeon
6.15 The Martian (12, 2015) An astronaut left stranded on Mars has to find a way to survive for years on meagre resources. Ridley Scott's sci-fi drama, starring Matt Damon
9.00 Stillwater (15, 2021) A man travels from Oklahoma to France to help his daughter, who is in prison for a murder she claims she did not commit. Crime thriller starring Matt Damon
11.45-3.30am Babylon (18, 2022) Comedy drama starring Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.30 pm FILM **The Green Man (PG, 1956)** Black comedy starring Alastair Sim
3.10 Whiplash Cobb's business is shut down when one of his passengers is kidnapped
3.45 FILM **Reach for the Sky (U, 1956)** Biopic of Second World War pilot Douglas Bader with Kenneth More
6.25 Dick Turpin Turpin's old commanding officer is assigned to bring him in
7.00 Maigret The inspector investigates the death of an Australian
8.00 The Duchess of Duke Street Louisa persuades Charlie to join in the fun
9.05 Sherlock Holmes: The Last Vampyre Feature-length drama starring Jeremy Brett
11.10 Eurotrash
11.45-12.20am Fortean TV

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.05pm The Ghettos & The Holocaust
7.20 Auschwitz: The Inside Man Witold Pilecki
8.30 The Roman Fleet
9.35 1945: The Savage Peace
10.50 The Ghettos & The Holocaust Documentary
12.00-1.15am Auschwitz: The Inside Man

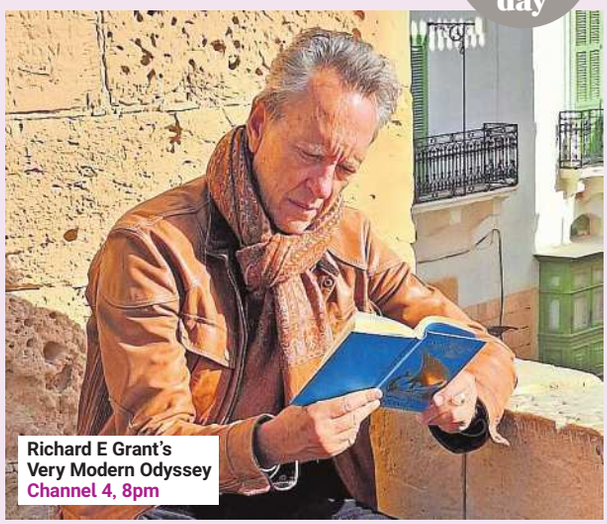
Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm Lockerbie The bombing of Pan Am flight 103
8.00 Lockerbie Investigators find a link to a terror cell
9.00 Lockerbie A Libyan double agent gives evidence
10.00 Lockerbie
11.00 Amsterdam Narcos
12.00-1.00am Amsterdam Narcos Documentary

Sunday 2

★ Picks of the day



Richard E Grant's Very Modern Odyssey
Channel 4, 8pm

Richard E Grant channels his inner Homer

Adding to the wine-dark sea of *Odyssey* discourse in the post-Christopher Nolan age, Richard E Grant throws himself into this epic travelogue, following the path of Odysseus's voyage around Europe, north Africa and Asia Minor. Armoured in a tan leather jacket, *above*, he begins his journey in the Maltese archipelago, long believed to have been the location of the nymph Calypso's love-cave, where Odysseus stayed for seven years while on his way back to Penelope. He also visits a megalithic stone temple purportedly built by giants, before heading to Turkey to visit the "real Troy". It is clear that Grant took on this job so he could grandly declaim passages of Homer's poem — sometimes in authentic ancient costuming. **Victoria Segal**

Van der Valk
ITV1, 8pm

It has taken two years for the fourth series of *Van der Valk* to arrive on British screens after its international broadcast but there's a classic quality to its crime-fighting that ensures it is far from time-sensitive. Tonight's story is an ageless tale of deep betrayal, family ties and good versus evil, as Marc Warren's detective, Piet Van der Valk, investigates the murder of a key witness in an impending gangland trial. The plotline lends a *Line of Duty*-style tension to the chase scenes and interrogations, while Anastasia Hille almost steals the show from Warren's striking poloneck as the crime matriarch Bibi Franklin. Filmed in Amsterdam, it looks

Marc Warren plays the Dutch detective Piet Van der Valk

enchanting too — although it is a shame that the original show's *Eye Level* theme music only remains as a vestigial homage. **VS**

Great Violinists at the Proms
BBC4, 9pm

Katie Derham presents an hour-long programme that includes the Proms debut of Sueye Park, a young South Korean performer who won the 13th International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition in 2025, playing the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. There is also a visit to the archives with performances from Nigel Kennedy and Nicola Benedetti — two of Britain's greatest violinists. **Joe Clay**

The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil
BBC4, 10pm

John McGrath's 1973 play examines Scottish history through a radical socialist lens, charting the exploitation of Scotland from the brutal 19th-century Highland clearances to the plundering of North Sea oil. A 1974 staging by the 7:84 theatre company was recorded for the BBC's *Play for Today* strand and, before a screening at 10.15pm, one of its stars, Bill Paterson, recalls the play, a musical drama featuring filmed reconstructions of events. **JC**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.00 BBC News
10.00 Prayer and Reflection (r)
10.30 Pilgrimage: The Road Through North Wales (r)
11.30 Money for Nothing (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News; Weather
1.15 Songs of Praise Laura Wright discovers the significance of mountains in the Bible
1.50 Escape to the Country (r)
2.15 FILM **Puss in Boots (U, 2011)** Animated comedy spin-off, with the voices of Antonio Banderas and Salma Hayek
3.35 The Mating Game (r)
4.35 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
5.35 BBC News
5.50 BBC Regional News; Weather
6.00 Celebrity Escape to the Country With broadcaster and presenter Angellica Bell (r)

Crime drama The Rapture (9pm)

7.00 Countryfile The first of four episodes in which Adam Henson meets a new generation of farmers navigating the challenges and opportunities of producing our food. He starts in North Wales
8.00 Antiques Roadshow At Brodie Castle in Morayshire Fiona Bruce meets a Highland Games commentator who has brought along a shot put, a hammer and a brooch presented by Queen Victoria (r)
9.00 The Rapture Gabs and Dick uncover evidence that Leonard is hiding something, while floods in India match Bethany's drawings. Gabs pushes her suspicions into the open (3/5)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.25 BBC Regional News
10.30 FILM **The Impossible (12, 2012)** A family spending Christmas in Thailand are separated in the 2004 tsunami and struggle to find each other in the ensuing chaos. Drama starring Naomi Watts and Ewan McGregor
12.10 am Who Do You Think You Are? Harriet Walter traces her maternal ancestry (r)
1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
1.15 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.40 am A to Z of TV Gardening (r)
7.25 Glorious Gardens from Above Christine Walkden visits the gardens of Staffordshire (r)
8.10 Countryfile (r)
9.05 Best of Weatherman Walking
9.35 Beechgrove Garden (r)
10.05 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
11.35 Indian Food Made Easy (r)
12.05 pm Indian Food Made Easy A firefighter cooks a curry (r)
12.35 FILM **Loch Ness (PG, 1996)** An American scientist is sent to Scotland to prove that the Loch Ness monster does not exist, to the outrage of the locals. Family drama with Ted Danson and Joely Richardson
2.15 Live Cricket The Hundred: MI London Women v Manchester Super Giants Women (Start-time **2.30**). Coverage of the match from The Oval

Shakespeare in Love (10pm)

6.00 Live Cricket The Hundred: MI London Men v Manchester Super Giants Men (Start-time **6.00**) Coverage of the match from the Oval. These two teams met last year at this ground with the game ending in a resounding nine-wicket victory for the London team. The Super Giants, known as the Originals last year, were bowled out for just 128 before the hosts reached their target with a massive 43 balls to spare, as Will Jacks hit 61 from just 26 balls
9.30 Live at the Apollo Stand up comedy from Nabil Abdulrashid, Jake Lambert and Rachel Fairburn (1/7) (r)
10.00 FILM **Shakespeare in Love (15, 1998)** Falling in love cures the Bard's writer's block and inspires him to pen the most famous love story of all time. Period romantic comedy starring Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow
11.55 Golf: Women's Open Highlights 2026 Action from the fourth and final day
12.55 am Sign Zone: Ann Droid Linda drags Sue to scatter ashes by the sea (r) (SL)
1.25 The Devil in the Family: The Fall of Ruby Franke Ruby banishes members of the family from their home (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am James Martin's American Adventure (r)
7.00 James Martin's Saturday Morning (r)
9.25 ITV News
9.30 Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh (r)
11.30 Fern Britton: Inside the Vet's
12.30 pm Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy Tom forages for truffles (r)
1.00 ITV News; Weather
1.10 Force of Nature (r)
2.10 FILM **The Man with the Golden Gun (PG, 1974)** Spy adventure starring Roger Moore and Christopher Lee
4.35 The Chase Celebrity Special With Len Goodman and Nicki Chapman (r)
5.35 The Chase Around the World The teams land in Lisbon (r)
6.30 ITV News; Weather
6.45 Regional News; Weather

A platypus on Force of Nature (7pm)

7.00 Force of Nature Shifting rains test three mothers as floods transform habitats, destroy homes, and bring perilous opportunity. Andrew Lincoln narrates (2/6)
8.00 Van der Valk New series. Two whistleblowers are under police protection prior to a hearing that could bring down the matriarch of a criminal empire. When the first informant is murdered, the team must ensure the second makes it to court. The situation is complicated by the fact that the officer in charge of the first victim is Van Der Valk's old flame. Drama starring Marc Warren. **See Pick of the Day** (1/3)
10.00 ITV News
10.15 FILM **Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (12, 2016)** The vigilante tries to save an army major who has been framed for murder by a sinister conspiracy. Action thriller sequel starring Tom Cruise and Cobie Smulders
12.25 am Shop on TV
3.00 Motorsport UK Richard John Neill presents action from Snetterton (r)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Dickinson's Real Deal The team head to Telford (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.15** Sportscene **8.00** My Epic Camel Adventure with Gordon Buchanan (r) **9.00** Paramedics on Scene. A man suffers a traumatic injury in a mountain bike accident **10.00** Still Game. Jack and Victor try a new wonder drug (r) **10.30** Scot Squad. The detectives smash a smuggling operation (r) **11.00** Cumming to the Cabaret **11.25** Cumming to the Cabaret. Last in the series **11.45pm-Midnight** Scotland's Most Remote Club Night. The people behind a techno and house night in Ullapool (r)
BBC1 N Ireland 10.30pm Fleadh Folk **11.30-1.10am FILM The Impossible (2012)**

The best of the week's live sport

Page 25

MI London Men captain Sam Curran
Sky Main Event, 6.30pm

Channel 4

6.20 am Cheers Comedy (r)
7.15 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
8.30 Frasier American sitcom (r)
10.00 Sunday Brunch
1.00 pm Jamie Cooks the Mediterranean (r)
2.00 Our Farm Next Door: Amanda, Clive and Kids As Christmas looms, Amanda and family face re-roofing Anty John's (r)
3.05 Britain's Favourite Railway Stations with Si King Si explores Glasgow Central's hidden tunnels and forgotten platform. Last in the series (r)
4.05 Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer look back at loft conversions (r)
4.35 FILM **Sister Act (PG, 1992)** Comedy starring Whoopi Goldberg and Maggie Smith
6.30 Channel 4 News

Julia Roberts stars (10.05pm)

7.00 Gogglebox Compilation of highlights from series 27, in which the Goggleboxers check out more of the biggest and best television

8.00 Richard E Grant's Very Modern Odyssey New series. The actor retraces the route take by Odysseus in Homer's classic *The Odyssey*. **See Pick of the Day** (1/4)

9.00 The Piano Claudia Winkleman and Mika are joined at London Bridge Station by Jools Holland. A 10-year-old takes to the keys and gets the whole station singing

10.05 FILM **Erin Brockovich (15, 2000)** A single mother desperate for work pleads her way into an administrative job at a law firm. It is not long before she stumbles across mislaid documents about a case brought against a corporation for poisoning the residents of a small town by contaminating their water supply. Realising something is amiss, she begins her own investigation. Fact-based drama starring Julia Roberts

12.30 am Ramy 1.40 Kitchen Nightmares USA 2.35 Mr & Mrs '55 Remembered 2.50 FILM **Mr & Mrs '55 (U, 1955)** (b/w) **5.20 Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds 5.50 Countdown**

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.00 Entertainment News on 5
9.15 FILM **Rango (PG, 2011)** A pet chameleon ends up lost in the desert, where he becomes sheriff of a lawless town of animals. Animated comedy, with the voices of Johnny Depp and Isla Fisher
11.30 Commonwealth Games 2026 Highlights of day nine (r)
12.30 pm Happy Campers: The Caravan Park (r)
1.30 Cruising with Susan Calman A cruise to Mexico (r)
2.30 Jane McDonald's Yorkshire: No Place Like Home The singer explores Yorkshire (r)
4.00 Live UK's Strongest Man 2026 Coverage of day two from Planet Ice Milton Keynes, featuring Group B
6.55 5 News Weekend

Inside the Four Seasons (9pm)

7.00 The 1970s Diet: Could It Work For You? Josie Gibson immerses herself in the food, drink and health culture of the 1970s (1/2) (r)

8.00 Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly Graeme Hall meets an 11-year-old beagle with an insatiable appetite and two cockapoos who won't stop barking, making their owner the talk of the town (r)

9.00 Inside the Four Seasons: Park Lane New series. Housekeeping manager Ivan tries to source two horsehair pillows for a guest (1/5)

10.00 Commonwealth Games 2026 Highlights from the final day in Glasgow, with medals on the line in netball, judo, bowls and para bowls, and track cycling and para track cycling

11.05 JFK Assassination: Inside the Trauma Room A reunion of doctors present at the hospital John F Kennedy was taken to after being shot (r)

1.00 am Cruise TV (r) **2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors** (r)
2.50 Holiday Scams: Don't Get Caught Out (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.30 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.20 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows (r) (SL)

BBC1 Scotland 10.30pm Icons of Football (r) **11.30** Sportscene: Premiership Highlights (r) **12.15am FILM The Impossible (2012)** **1.55** Weather **2.00-6.00am** BBC News
STV 12.25-3.00am Shop on TV **3.50-5.05am** Unwind with STV

S4C 3.00pm Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **6.40** News **6.50** Pobol y Cwm Omnibws **8.00** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **9.30** Live Gemau'r Gymanwlad: Y Ras i Glasgow. Including coverage of the closing ceremony **10.30-12.15am** Sgorio

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm The Fairytale Castles of King Ludwig II with Dan Cruickshank
8.00 Cairngorms: A Year in the Wild Britain's largest national park (S1, ep3)
9.00 Great Violinists at the Proms Featuring performances by Sueye Park, Liya Petrova and Nicola Benedetti. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 Bill Paterson Remembers: The Cheviot, The Stag and The Black, Black Oil The actor looks back on one of the earliest roles of his career. **See Pick of the Day**
10.15 The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil Docudrama adaptation of John McGrath's play. **See Pick of the Day**
11.45-12.15am 7:84: Keep Right On? Ex-S

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

2.00 pm Midsomer Murders A man's body is found tied down in a miniature village (S12, ep5)
4.00 Midsomer Murders A burglar dubbed "the Creeper" targets Midsomer (S12, ep6)
6.00 Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates the murder of a local councillor (S12, ep7)
8.00 Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates a dubious land deal in Brighton (S13, ep1)
10.00 Vera When a dock worker plunges from a multi-storey car park, Vera investigates a work dispute over a young man's death and uncovers a life of secrets and lies
11.50-1.30am Wycliffe The murder of a Penzance bookshop owner leads the detective to uncover a family feud

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm EastEnders
9.00 Shabaz Asks: Are Billionaires Bad? Documentary
9.50 Gaia: A Death on Dancing Ledge
10.35 Gaia: A Death on Dancing Ledge
11.20-12.05am Gaia: A Death on Dancing Ledge

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

11.00am Live The Hundred Trent Rockets Women v Sunrisers Leeds Women
1.30pm Live Women's Golf
6.30 Live The Hundred MI London Men v Manchester Super Giants Men
9.00 Live Tennis The Washington DC Open
12.00-4.00am Live Tennis

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

1.00 pm Cirque du Soleil: Varekai The circus company tells the story of Icarus
3.00 André Rieu: Live in Malta The violinist and his Johann Strauss Orchestra perform
4.30 Classic Artists: Cream The story of the 1960s rock supergroup
7.00 Grand Ole Opry: Opry Live With Vince Gill, Patty Loveless and Dustin Lynch
8.00 FILM **Murder by Decree (15, 1978)** Sherlock Holmes mystery starring Christopher Plummer and James Mason
10.20 Johnson & Knopfler's Music Legends Brian and Mark are joined by Nile Rodgers
11.20-12.40am Gary Moore: One Night in Dublin A 2005 concert by the blues guitarist

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

12.40 pm Cadfael The monk investigates the murder of a wealthy cleric
2.20 FILM **The Horse Soldiers (U, 1959)** Western starring John Wayne and William Holden
4.45 Sharpe A Spanish rebel captures British deserters. Sean Bean stars
6.55 Sharpe The officer takes charge of an unprepared unit
9.00 FILM **Time Bandits (PG, 1981)** A schoolboy meets characters from history as he is escorted on a bizarre journey through time by a group of larcenous dwarfs. Fantasy comedy, with Craig Warnock and David Rappaport
11.25-12.45am The Summit Australia The hikers face a run for their lives

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

6.45pm FILM **Miss Congeniality (12, 2000)** Comedy starring Sandra Bullock and Michael Caine
9.00 The Only Way Is Essex New series. Elma is struggling to forgive Harry
10.00 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad! Animated comedy

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

1.30pm Live Men's Cycling Pro Series
2.30-5.45 Live Tour de France Women
6.15 MLB Highlights
7.15 Live MLB
10.00 MLB Plays of the Week
10.30 World Rally Championship
11.00-11.30 British Superbikes

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

2.00 pm A Place in the Sun In Majorca
3.00 A Place in the Sun A couple seek a holiday home in Charente, south-west France
3.50 Come Dine with Me
4.20 Come Dine with Me
4.50 Come Dine with Me
5.20 Come Dine with Me
5.55 Come Dine with Me
6.25 Four in a Bed
6.55 Four in a Bed
7.25 Four in a Bed
7.55 Four in a Bed
8.30 Four in a Bed
9.00 The Emergency Ward Dr Sparkhall takes the tourniquet off a handyman's blood-soaked arm
10.00 24 Hours in A&E Doctors are concerned a 38-year-old woman may be paralysed
11.00-12.05am 24 Hours in A&E A 33-year-old man is rushed into King's College Hospital with severe knife wounds

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.20 pm Call the Midwife Sister Hilda and Dr Turner support a young father with a lung condition (S11, ep4)
2.40 Catherine Cookson's The Rag Nymph Feature-length period melodrama starring Honeysuckle Weeks
5.55 Home Fires Steph faces losing the farm
6.55 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates Hetty poses as a victim of domestic abuse (S2, ep6)
8.05 Sister Boniface Mysteries A resident is found poisoned (S2, ep10)
9.05 Silent Witness Nikki investigates whether a plane crash was deliberate sabotage (S23, ep1)
11.20-12.20am New Tricks The squad re-examines the disappearance of an actress (S6, ep4)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

6.55pm Stanley Tucci: Searching for Italy
7.55 Bangers & Cash Derek collects an Opel Manta
8.55 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
9.55 Canal Boat Diaries
10.55 Canal Boat Diaries
11.55-12.55am Canal Boat Diaries Documentary

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.15pm The White Lotus Double bill (S2, ep6&7)
9.00 House of the Dragon *Game of Thrones* prequel, starring Matt Smith (S3, ep6)
10.15 Gomorrah: The Origins Crime drama prequel starring Luca Lubrano (1/6)
11.20-12.15am Gomorrah: The Origins (2/6)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.55 pm Oliver! (U, 1968) Musical starring Ron Moody
4.50 The Call of the Wild (PG, 2020) Historical adventure starring Harrison Ford
6.45 Independence Day: Resurgence (12, 2016) Two decades after the world was saved from an alien attack, a second even deadlier invasion begins. Sci-fi adventure starring Jeff Goldblum
9.00 Captain Phillips (12, 2013) The captain of a cargo ship travelling around the coast of Somalia is taken hostage when pirates raid the vessel. Fact-based thriller starring Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi
11.40-1.50am Withnail & I (15, 1987) Cult black comedy starring Richard E Grant

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.20 pm FILM **Hobson's Choice (U, 1953)** Comedy starring John Mills
3.30 For the Love of Ada Ada gets a job at the town hall
4.00 The Man from UNCLE Kuryakin infiltrates a South American prison camp
5.00 The Footage Detectives A rediscovered reel of Penelope Keith
6.00 FILM **The Bargee (PG, 1964)** Comedy, with Harry H Corbett
8.20 A Game of Murder Mrs Lincoln's nephew wants the dog collar returned
9.25 FILM **Chase a Crooked Shadow (U, 1957)** Thriller starring Richard Todd and Anne Baxter
11.10-12.50am The Best of The Adventurers Highlights from the 1970s "Adventures of" series

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

7.20pm Spy Ops
8.15 Spy Ops The US military recover a sunken Soviet submarine
9.05 Sicily: The Conquered Isle Documentary exploring Sicily's ancient past (1/2)
10.30 Sicily: The Conquered Isle Documentary (2/2)
12.00-1.00am Spy Ops

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.45pm Katie Price: Nothing to Hide Katie's life is in turmoil. Last in the series
9.00 Groomed: The Truth Behind the Lie Charting the case of Eleanor Williams
10.00 Tell Them You Love Me
12.00-2.15am FILM **Tina (15, 2021)** A celebration of Tina Turner's life and career

Monday 3

★ Picks of the day

Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace
ITV1, 9pm

Abandoned children search for their past

This series spun off from *Long Lost Family* seeks to connect foundlings with members of their birth family. Ideally that is the mothers who abandoned them, albeit usually in places where they expected the babies to be found. That was the case with Sarah, *above with Davina McCall*, whose story is one of two told in Nicky Campbell and McCall's show tonight; she was left in a telephone box in Leicester in 1983. Ariel Bruce's team identify the birth mother, as they do in a storyline centred on David, left in a London apartment block in 1960. A quest that also takes in Paris homes in on the Netherlands and a now dead woman called Petra — an apt outcome, as *Long Lost Family*'s own birth parent was a now axed Dutch show, *Spoorloos*. **John Dugdale**

Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith Channel 4, 4pm

When Penelope Keith died, aged 86, at the end of June, the BBC had her 1970s sitcom hits, *The Good Life* and *To the Manor Born*, available to rerun. Channel 4, by contrast, is able to repeat this series from January, having earlier launched her sideline as a presenter with *Penelope Keith's Hidden Villages* (2014-16). She provides the voiceover and links but doesn't visit the series' nine recurring stately homes, which share a need to pay for upkeep bills. First up are mansions in the Cotswolds whose owners respectively hope that opening a café and sauna, using family members to do everything, and exploiting a Gunpowder Plot

The Good Life star Penelope Keith died in June, aged 86

connection will do the trick. A bit like Keith herself in her second career, all are elderly national treasures reinventing themselves. **JD**

Celebrity Hunted Channel 4, 9pm

Famous and not so famous faces race for Stand Up To Cancer from Greenwich with the hunters in hot pursuit. Will Brian Conley and his daughter Lucy, the *Strictly* dancers Amy Dowden and Carlos Gu, the presenters Sophie Morgan and JJ Chalmers, the comedians Jen Brister and Laura Smyth, the Love Islanders Chris Taylor and Toby Aromolaran and the property developers Scarlette and Stuart Douglas remain at liberty? **Helen Stewart**

Sally Magnusson Remembers: Mastermind BBC4, 9pm

The broadcaster and writer Sally Magnusson is being asked not to reminisce about her own long TV career presenting *Songs of Praise*, but that of her father, Magnus. From 1972 to 1997 he was the BBC's quizmaster on *Mastermind*, welcoming contestants to the leather chair and coining the catchphrase, "I've started, so I'll finish." Not as much fun having it shouted at her on the way to school, his daughter confirms. **HS**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Animal Park A porcupine (r)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back Hunting a stolen pickup (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Two rattan chairs and obsolete tools
2.45 Escape to the Country A couple want to relocate to Somerset or Devon (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room A medical device is the oddest item ever seen on the show
4.30 The Answer Run New series. Quiz hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

New quiz The Answer Run (4.30pm)

7.00 The One Show Presented by Alex Jones and Roman Kemp
7.30 EastEnders Peter's suspicions about Lauren grow, while Barney confesses to Zack
8.00 Britain's Strictest Schools: Panorama Current affairs report covering a story
8.30 Scam Interceptors A man is trapped into believing he is going to be arrested (r)
9.00 The Rapture Gabs meets Anika Drake. New nurse Siobhan raises suspicions at Oxsmith. When Bethany is found injured, Gabs and Rafiq plan her escape. Max pushes Caroline to back Rostyre (4/5)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.45 FILM The Mist (15, 2007) The residents of a town are divided by how to survive when a strange fog concealing ravenous monsters envelops the area. Sci-fi horror starring Thomas Jane, Marcia Gay Harden, Laurie Holden and Toby Jones
12.40 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.45 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Bargain Hunt (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Repair Shop A Cretan lyra (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games With Jake Wood (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation (r)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown Farmers attend Staffordshire County Show (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow The experts visit the Mansion House in London (r)
5.15 Flog It! The team visits Manchester (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Double bill. Former players Gethin Jones, Tiff Stevenson, Kate Thornton and Gary Wilmot take part (r)

Chris Packham: Evolution (9pm)

7.00 Global Eye Investigations from BBC correspondents all over the world
7.30 Mastermind Specialist subjects include birds of prey and King Charles I
8.00 Only Connect Victoria Coren Mitchell presents the quiz
8.30 University Challenge Guildhall School of Music and Drama v Darwin College, Cambridge
9.00 Evolution Chris Packham dives into one of the biggest questions in nature, as he considers how intelligence itself evolved and how it arose in the extraordinary mind of the dolphin (4/5)
10.00 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing Bob and Paul head to the Norfolk Broads (4/6) (r)
10.30 Newsnight Analysis of the day's events presented by Victoria Derbyshire
11.05 FILM Sing Sing (15, 2023) A man imprisoned for a crime he did not commit finds new purpose by acting in a theatre group with other incarcerated men. Drama starring Colman Domingo and Sean San Jose
12.45 am Sign Zone: Countryfile The final stop on Anita Rani's east coast road trip is Orford Ness in Suffolk (r) (SL)
1.40 Bergerac A threatening letter sent to the Wakefields corroborates a hunch (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and his dealers land at Aerospace Bristol and set up the den beneath the wings of Concorde (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Bradley Walsh hosts as contestants from Wigan, Ross-on-Wye, Liverpool and Stevenage work together as a team (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Drama in Coronation Street (8.30pm)

7.30 Fletchers' Family Farm A cow gives birth but it is not straightforward (8/10) (r)
8.00 Emmerdale Cain has a conversation with Kyle, and Nicola's excitement fades
8.30 Coronation Street Cassie bids an emotional farewell. Debbie has a glimpse into her future
9.00 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace ★ New series. Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell investigate the cases of foundlings from 1983 and 1960. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 Cold Case Forensics: The Death of God's Banker A look at the death of Italian banker Roberto Calvi (1/3) (r)
11.45 Love & Death Allan grows concerned when his calls to Betty go unanswered (4/7) (r)
12.45 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Staircase In the months preceding Kathleen's death, Michael leads a double life. Starring Colin Firth (r) (SL)
4.05 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Dickinson's Real Deal (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 2.00pm-4.30 Sign Zone (r) **7.00** Reporting Scotland **7.30** The Great Food Guys (r) **8.00** The Mountain (r) **8.30** The Mountain (r) **9.00** Interior Design Masters with Alan Carr. The designers transform common rooms at the Royal Navy Air Station in Somerset (r) **10.00** River City. Conor tries to convince Nicole they should come clean **10.30** Two Doors Down (r) **11.00** Scotcast. Discussion **11.30pm-Midnight** Gary: Tank Commander (r)
BBC1 Wales 8.30-9.00pm Best of Weatherman Walking. Highlights
BBC1 N Ireland 10.45pm Bikes! Armoy Road Races **11.25 FILM The Mist (2007)**

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Zoe Saldaña in season three of Lioness
Paramount+

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA A café in Spring, Texas (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway A majestic detached house in Greater Manchester (r)
2.10 Countdown With Ade Adepitan
3.00 A Place in the Sun A holiday home in Lucca, Italy (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith Maintaining stately homes and gardens. **See Pick of the Day** (r)
5.00 Château DIY A 180-year-old wine barrel is turned into a quirky dining space (r)
6.00 American Pickers The experts examine a collection of circus and sideshow memorabilia (r)

Celebrity Hunted returns (9pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Dover 24/7: Britain's Busiest Port Border Force officers are on the hunt for illegal meat being smuggled into Britain, police officers are on a stake-out, and the engineers face their biggest job of the year

9.00 Celebrity Hunted New series. A group of celebrities, including Brian and Lucy Conley, Amy Dowden, Carlos Gu and JJ Chalmers, turn fugitive and attempt to evade capture. **See Pick of the Day**

10.00 Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives The family host an ambitious bonfire night for the estate in memory of their dad Sid. Trewley gets a lesson in tough love from her mum

11.05 Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich A businesswoman marks her 60th birthday with an endoscopic facelift, and a model undergoes a laser procedure to tighten her jawline (3/6) (r)

12.05 am Secrets of the Celebrity Sex Tapes 12.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **1.45 Don't Date Brandon** (r) (SL) **4.30 Hollyoaks Omnibus** (r) (SL) **5.40 Sunday Brunch** (r) **5.50 Countdown** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM A Reservation for Death (PG, TVM, 2021) A travel writer witnesses a murder at a hotel in Malta and becomes ensnared in a web of intrigue and espionage. Mystery starring Nathalie Kelley
4.00 Castle The author reveals he is now a licensed private investigator (r)
4.55 Love Nature Cameras focus on a flock of red kites, and their nightly routine (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Majorca: A Year in the Sun Cameras explore the island of Majorca's culture (r)
6.55 5 News Update

A new series of Fare Dodgers (9pm)

7.00 Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders Officers pull over the driver of a suspected cloned car and he claims he has just swapped the registrations (4/10) (r)
7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Street Cops: Catching the Yobs Police pursue a suspected stolen SUV being driven recklessly in Corby and two Northampton PCs are called to deal with a loud aggressive drunk

9.00 Fare Dodgers: At War with the Law New series. A Transport for London investigator pursues a suspected fare evader owing the network almost £2000 in unpaid fares

10.00 Police Interceptors: Taking Down the Shoplifting Gangs Officers tackle thieves terrorising supermarkets and shops, with armed units scrambled to hunt for a violent shoplifter (r)

11.05 Traffic Cops Officers clamp down on repeat offenders in North Yorkshire, arresting a woman in Selby with a history of drink driving after she smashed into two parked cars after a drinking session (r)

12.05 am Car Pound Cops (r)
1.00 Cruise TV (r) **2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors** (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r) **4.35 The Highland Vet** (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows (r) (SL)

1.20-6.00am BBC News **BBC2 N Ireland** **10.00-10.30pm** Kayak ó Thuaidh (r) **BBC1 Scotland** **10.45pm** Sportscene: Premiership Highlights **11.15 FILM The Mist (2007)** **1.10am** Scotcast (r) **1.40** Weather for the Week Ahead **1.45-6.00am** BBC News

STV **12.45-3.00am** Shop on TV **4.05-6.00am** Night Vision **S4C** **6.00-6.59pm** Am Dro! (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **10.00** Y Babell Lên 2026 **10.30** Ralïo+ **11.00-12.05am** Y Sioe 2026 (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Atlantic: The Wildest Ocean on Earth Life in the warm waters of the tropical Atlantic (3/3)
8.00 The Art of Spain Exploring the history of Spanish art (1/3)
9.00 Sally Magnusson Remembers: Mastermind The broadcaster shares memories of her father's time as the host of *Mastermind*. **See Pick of the Day**
9.20 Mastermind 1972 Final Magnus Magnusson presents
9.50 Call My Bluff With Sally Magnusson and Peter Egan
10.20 Becoming Frida Kahlo Dangerous politics and turbulent love shock the painter's world (3/3)
11.20-12.20am Turner: The Man Who Painted Britain Documentary drama chronicling the painter's life

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A Scarecrow Festival takes a grisly turn (S22, ep4)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat A Ming vase is stolen
6.55 Heartbeat Merton investigates a long-buried secret
8.00 Midsomer Murders A woman is stabbed to death in a churchyard (S13, ep2)
10.00 Grantchester A computer laboratory head dies from mercury poisoning (S4, ep3)
11.00 Grantchester Will and Geordie look into a woman's ultimate fatal injuries in a fall (S4, ep4)
11.50-1.25am Trial & Retribution Part one of two. The team investigate the murder of a schoolgirl (S10, ep3)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60 The wildlife of British Columbia
7.30 Deadly 60 In Costa Rica
8.00 The Great British Sewing Bee Recycling T-shirts
9.00 Top Gear Patagonia Special A gruelling trip
11.10-12.10am Icons of Football Craig Gordon

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

3.00pm-6.00 Live The Hundred: Welsh Fire Women v Southern Brave Women (Start-time **3.00**). Coverage from Sophia Gardens, Cardiff
6.30 Live SPFL: Celtic v Dundee (Kick-off **7.30**)
10.15-4.00am Live Tennis Coverage from day two of the Canadian Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Seventies
4.00 Discovering: Joan Fontaine
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2021
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected An American thief faces extradition
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A carnival worker buys a strange monkey
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A member of a fraternity is tricked into believing he killed someone
8.00 André Rieu: Happy Days Are Here Again The violinist performs in Maastricht
11.00-12.40am Brian and Roger Eno Live at the Acropolis The brothers' first live performance together

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm Magnum, PI Thomas stops a suicide attempt
2.30 Dempsey and Makepeace The duo investigate illegal boxing
3.40 Boon Ken's ex-girlfriend comes back on the scene
4.45 The Professionals A sniper targets a tennis tournament
5.55 Minder A cache of diamonds is missing
7.00 River Monsters A face-eating creature in remote Bolivia
7.30 River Monsters A snakehead fish
8.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole joins the Harley Owners Group for a ride
9.00 FILM Under Siege (15, 1992) Action adventure starring Steven Seagal
11.05-12.05am Star Trek: Strange New Worlds The crew become trapped in a fairy tale

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor USA Rob Lowe hosts the game show
8.00 The 1% Club Quiz
9.00 The Only Way Is Essex Dani and Jonnie embrace their romance, but Jonnie's twin brother has his doubts
10.00 Family Guy Triple bill
11.35-12.05am American Dad! Stan goes back in time

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

11.00am-11.15 Live Uefa Champions League The draw
12.00noon-12.30pm Live Uefa Europa League Draw
1.00pm-1.30 Live Uefa Conference League The draw
2.30-5.45 Live Tour de France Women Stage three
6.00-9.30 Live Ultimate Pool
1.00am-4.00 Live MLB

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In north Surrey
3.20 Four in a Bed
5.50 Car S.O.S Tim and Fuzz take on a neglected 1988 Fiat Uno Turbo
6.50 Car S.O.S Tim and Fuzz take on a 1993 Toyota Supra Mk4 owned by a former motorcycle racer
7.55 Grand Designs A house built out of shipping containers on a farm in Co Derry
9.00 Bill Bailey's Vietnam Bill uncovers the importance of ancient stories in Vietnamese culture. Last in the series
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A woman involved in a motorbike accident is brought to St George's Hospital in London
11.00-12.05am 24 Hours in A&E The medics treat sport enthusiasts involved in accidents

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Neighbours
3.00 Pie in the Sky Drama (S5, ep5)
4.05 Lovejoy (S5, ep10)
5.20 As Time Goes By Lionel and Jean spend a nostalgic day out (S1, ep3)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine Compo adopts a spiritual outlook on life (S1, ep3)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine The Trio go on a trip to a historical home (S1, ep4)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Compo dresses smartly to impress a lady (S1, ep5)
8.00 The Brokenwood Mysteries An ex-boyfriend of Kristin's dies while skydiving (S4, ep1)
10.00 New Tricks The squad re-examines the disappearance of an actress (S6, ep4)
11.20-12.40am Luther Crime thriller starring Idris Elba (S1, ep1)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Green Planet
8.00 Canal Boat Diaries
8.30 Canal Boat Diaries
9.00 Portillo's Empire Journey
10.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
11.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A Ford Granada Ghia

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.50pm True Detective: Night Country (S4, ep4)
7.55 True Detective: Night Country (S4, ep5)
9.00 House of the Dragon *Game of Thrones* prequel starring Matt Smith (S3, ep7)
10.15 The Last of Us (S1, ep9)
11.20-12.30am Dune: Prophecy Sci-fi (2/6)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.40 pm Prince Valiant (U, 1954) Adventure with Robert Wagner
2.45 Mr Hobbs Takes a Vacation (U, 1962) Comedy starring James Stewart
5.00 10 Things I Hate About You (12, 1999) Comedy starring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles
6.50 The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (12, 2003) Comic-book fantasy adventure with Sean Connery
9.00 Twister (PG, 1996) A storm-chaser and her estranged husband reunite to map the path of a large tornado. Action thriller with Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton
11.15-1.05am Beast (15, 2022) A man and his daughters are hunted by a huge rogue lion. Action thriller starring Idris Elba

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm FILM The Green Man (PG, 1956) Black comedy starring Alastair Sim
3.10 FILM Confession (PG, 1955) Crime drama starring Sydney Chaplin
5.05 FILM Doctor in the House (PG, 1954) Comedy starring Dirk Bogarde
7.00 The Footage Detectives The projectionist at Manchester's old Odeon introduces vintage cinema ads
8.00 Maigret The inspector travels to Finland to investigate a colleague's murder
9.50 FILM The Saint: The Fiction Makers (U, 1968) Adventure starring Roger Moore
11.55-1.55am FILM Murders in Hossegor (15, 2017) Crime drama starring Xavier Deluc and Barbara Cabrita

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.55pm Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall The Caribbean
7.55 Pirates: Behind the Legends William Kidd
8.55 The Anti-Soviet Fighters
10.00 Hitler's Gold
11.00 Pirates: Behind the Legends William Kidd
12.00-1.10am The Anti-Soviet Fighters

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm David Frost Vs A look back at the journalist's interviews with Elton John
8.00 The Cult of the Family Exploring Australia's most notorious cult — The Family
11.20-1.20am Costa Concordia: Chronicle of a Disaster Accounts of the sinking of the cruise ship

Tuesday 4

★ Picks of the day

The Victorians with Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman 5, 9pm

What life was like for the Victorians

Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman return with another of their *Rich Lives, Poor Lives* investigative series, in this episode focusing on the Victorian age. The presenting pair play-act happily as irretrievable snob and beaten-down worker. Tonight, the age of the railways, which would transform the British countryside, revolutionise trade and create opportunities for ordinary people. Goodman points out that the fastest most people would have travelled was at their own running pace, so the mere idea of stepping on to the third-class open carriages was breathtaking. First, railway lines would have to be cut through the land. Men of vision laid the plans, but for the labourers it was dirty, dangerous work. **Helen Stewart**

Cold Case Forensics: A Death on the Nile ITV1, 9pm

The former senior Home Office forensic scientist Dr Angela Gallop and her team investigate the mysterious sudden death of a British solicitor while on a romantic holiday in Egypt. The *Cold Case Forensics* true crime documentary strand has been running since 2022, and in this latest episode Gallop seeks to prove that Cheryl Lewis, from north Wales, was murdered at the Winter Palace Hotel on the banks of the River Nile in Luxor in October 1998. The episode is titled *A Death on the Nile* — Agatha Christie frequented the hotel, which was a source of inspiration for her 1937 novel. Lewis's partner, the industrial chemist John Allan,

The forensic scientist Dr Angela Gallop investigates a sudden death

pleaded not guilty to her murder and blamed drug dealers, arms runners or diamond smugglers. Nicola Walker narrates. **HS**

The Salisbury Poisonings: A Spy Next Door Sky Documentaries/Now, 9pm

If Channel 4's *The Salisbury Poisonings* hasn't answered all your questions about the 2018 Novichok attack on Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, then this might. Among those interviewed are the former prime minister Theresa May; the former home secretary Amber Rudd; and Charlie Rowley, the partner of Dawn Sturgess, the woman killed by exposure to the nerve agent. **Victoria Segal**

Joe & David's Magical Sitcom Tour U&Gold, 9pm

This show sounds like it should simply be a frivolous lark: just two comedians — Joe Wilkinson and his writing partner David Earl — visiting sites associated with their favourite sitcoms. However, what transpires here is an oddly moving, eerily surreal trip through the world of *Porridge*, including an encounter with the show's writers, Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais. An emotional testament to the power of TV. **VS**

This week's best live sport Page 25

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Animal Park Two cheetahs (r)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back Stolen cars in Felixstowe (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing A massage bed and a dining set
2.45 Escape to the Country Hunting for a Pembrokeshire property with a holiday let (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room Featuring a novelty train teapot, toy power tools, ornate rice barrels, and a decorative bust (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Sewing Bee's Sophie Willan (8pm)

7.00 The One Show Alex Jones and Lauren Laverne present
7.30 EastEnders Ravi pushes Priya for answers about her mystery man, and Patrick returns
8.00 The Great British Sewing Bee The sewers celebrate Mexican fashion, demonstrating their skills with a folkloric top, structural garments made from tablecloths and outfits inspired by festivals (4/10)
9.00 Murder 24/7 The first of a two-part investigation into the 2025 murder of 54-year-old Hereford man Jamie Gawler, who was found in his flat having being beaten to death. Continues tomorrow (5/8)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 FILM Robin Hood (12, 2010) An archer returning from the crusades faces a plot by a traitorous knight to bring about a French conquest of England. Ridley Scott's medieval adventure starring Russell Crowe, Cate Blanchett and Mark Strong
12.50 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.55 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Bargain Hunt (r)
7.15 The Bidding Room (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Great British Sewing Bee (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Trivia-based games (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? The quiz heads to Cardiff (r)
2.45 Live Cricket — The Hundred: Sunrisers Leeds Women v London Spirit Women (Start-time **3.00**). Coverage of the match at Headingley. The Sunrisers claimed an eight-wicket victory when these teams met at Lord's in last season's competition, with Phoebe Litchfield's 55 not out from 38 balls proving to be decisive and earning her the player of the match award

Timothy Spall: The Last Bus (11.05pm)

6.00 Live Cricket — The Hundred: Sunrisers Leeds Men v London Spirit Men (Start-time **6.30**). Coverage of the match at Headingley. Zak Crawley top-scored for the then-known Northern Superchargers with 55 not out from 38 balls, as he inspired his team to an eight-wicket win over today's opponents in last season's competition. The Leeds-based outfit went on to reach the Eliminator, but the contest was rained off, with Trent Rockets advancing at their expense due to having a better position in the round-robin stage
9.30 The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire An illicit old ally of Lestat's boards the dazed band's tour bus (2/7)
10.15 It Happened to Me: I Was Jailed in Japan for Ketamine
10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis with Victoria Derbyshire
11.05 FILM The Last Bus (12, 2021) A pensioner travels from John O'Groats to Land's End using his free bus pass, becoming a social media celebrity along the way. Drama with Timothy Spall and Phyllis Logan
12.30 am-1.30 Sign Zone: Uncanny Adaptation of the Radio 4 series, featuring real-life accounts of supernatural encounters, expert analysis, and investigations. Presented by Danny Robins (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and his team of experts are in Crewe, where Fay Rutter assesses some timepieces and Stewart Hoffgartner spies a gem in a boy's toy collection (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase With contestants from Welwyn Garden City, Northampton, Liverpool and East Yorkshire (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Emmerdale's Nicola (8pm)

7.30 Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel The CEO arrives in London (3/6)
8.00 Emmerdale Nicola makes a worrying discovery, and Cain decides now is the time
8.30 Coronation Street Dylan ends up unconscious after a confrontation with Brody
9.00 Cold Case Forensics: A Death on the Nile ★ A forensic scientist and her team investigate the mysterious, sudden death of a British solicitor while on a romantic holiday in Egypt. **See Pick of the Day** (2/3)
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 FILM Bad Boys II (15, 2003) Two mismatched undercover cops set out to stop a drug lord flooding the market with a deadly form of Ecstasy. Comedy thriller sequel starring Will Smith, Martin Lawrence and Gabrielle Union
1.10 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Summit The Mountain's Keeper presents the group with a dilemma (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.30** My Kind of Town. A visit to the Borders town of Hawick (r) **8.00** This Farming Life. Andy and Jo harvest their crops after a challenging year (r) **9.00** The Three Kings. The impact of Matt Busby, Bill Shankly and Jock Stein on football **10.45** Scotcast **11.15** Our Lives: Stone Strong (r) **11.45pm-Midnight** Loop (r)

BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm House of the Year (r) **11.10 FILM Robin Hood (2010)** Medieval adventure starring Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett **1.20-6.00am** News **BBC1 Scot 7.00-7.30pm** River City. Conor tries to convince Nicole they should come clean (r)

The best of the week's films on TV
Pages 26-27

Russell Crowe stars in Robin Hood
BBC1, 10.40pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA In New Orleans (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway A house in the Welsh Valleys (r)
2.10 Countdown With Ade Adepitan
3.00 A Place in the Sun Best friends search for a holiday home in Andalucia, Spain (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith A couple have plans to transform a house in the Cotswolds into a sauna (r)
5.00 Château DIY Trish tries to rebuild a bridge over a stream with no DIY experience (r)
6.00 American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz discover a fleet of concept cars (r)

Hotel Chocolat Unwrapped (8pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Hotel Chocolat Unwrapped A chocolatier dreams up limited edition drinking chocolate flavours, and a founder pulls out all the stops during the countdown to the opening of the Chicago store

9.00 Celebrity Hunted Two of the fugitives drop in on a celebrity colleague, another pair make a bold move by going on live television and two more alert the hunters after cracking jokes in Brighton

10.00 Gogglebox The armchair critics' views of *The Celebrity Traitors, Game of Wool: Britain's Best Knitter, Trigger Point, Hunted, Squid Game: The Challenge* and *Hamza's Hidden Wild Isles* (r)

11.05 Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives The family host an ambitious bonfire night for the estate in memory of their dad Sid. Trewley gets a lesson in tough love from her mum (r)

12.05 am Naked Attraction (r) **1.05 Hotel Hell** (r) (SL) **1.55 FILM Breakthrough (12, 2019)** (SL)
3.50 Couples Come Dine with Me (r) (SL) **4.45 The Piano** (r) (SL) **5.40 Find It, Fix It, Flog It** (r) **5.50 Countdown** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.15 FILM A Murder in Venice (PG, TVM, 2023) When her new roommate goes missing, an art student teams up with her aunt to save her friend. Thriller starring Sophie Hopkins
4.00 Castle Beckett and her team investigate the murder of a television actress (r)
4.55 Love Nature Cameras focus on Eryri National Park in North Wales, and its many dramatic mountains (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Majorca: A Year in the Sun A look at the yachting industry's relationship with the island (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Keeping bees at Longleat (8pm)

7.00 The Yorkshire Vet: At Home with the Greens Jean gets to see her farm from above when Peter Wright takes her on a helicopter ride (2/4) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Inside Longleat There are unexpected visitors in the garden, the cameras are primed to investigate which mammal has made more progress in the waterways in a year than humans have in 30

9.00 The Victorians with Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman Rob Rinder and Ruth Goodman discover how some of history's most famous events were experienced by the rich and by the poor. They start by exploring the 1840s Victorian era, when railway mania swept Britain. **See Pick of the Day**

10.30 The Pile Up: Death on the Motorway An analysis of one of the worst motorway crashes in British history, which took place on Friday, 4th November, 2011, when 34 vehicles were involved a pile-up on the M5 near Taunton (r)

12.05 am The Cannibal Next Door (r) **1.00 Cruise TV** (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.30 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows (r) (SL)

12.50am Scotcast (r) **1.20** Weather for the Week Ahead **1.25-6.00am** BBC News **STV 1.10-3.00am** Shop on TV **3.50-6.00am** Night Vision **UTV 7.30-8.00pm** Life Times **S4C 5.00pm** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026. The folk song parties for under-25s **7.30** News **7.50** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026. The under-25 'cerdd dant' parties and the youth choirs **10.15** Y Babell Lên 2026. Events in the Literary Pavilion **10.45-11.50** Iaith ar Daith. The Rev Kate Bottley embarks on a linguistic road trip across Wales (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Great British Railway Journeys From Lincoln to York
7.30 Wainwright Walks The work of Alfred Wainwright (S1, ep1)
8.00 To the Manor Born Comedy (S1, ep1)
8.30 Keeping Up Appearances Hyacinth plans a special supper. Last in the series (S3, ep7)
9.00 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens England's first all-female battle for succession (3/3)
10.00 Castles: Britain's Fortified History How some castles were transformed (3/3)
11.00 Corridors of Power: Should America Police the World? How Obama handled the threat of chemical weapons (7/8)
12.00-1.00am Corridors of Power: Should America Police the World? (8/8)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A man's body is found in a theatre (S22, ep5)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
5.15 Classic Coronation Street Liz and Lloyd misread each other
5.50 Heartbeat A newcomer reveals a murky past
6.55 Heartbeat Bank robbers go on the run in Aidensfield
8.00 Vera The detective investigates when a body is found on the moors
10.00 Grantchester Will learns his father is in trouble (S4, ep5)
11.00 Grantchester A curious case unfolds concerning the murder of a Teddy Boy at a dance hall (S4, ep6)
11.50-1.25am Trial & Retribution Part two of two. Connor struggles to find a lead (S10, ep4)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60 Double bill
8.00 Top Gear Visiting Italy
9.00 Survivor Australia New series. Reality show in Samoa
10.30 Survivor Australia There is a distinct difference between the two Tribes
11.50-1.20am Confessions of a Steroid Gang Triple bill

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

3.00pm Live The Hundred: Sunrisers Leeds Women v London Spirit Women (Start-time **3.00**)
6.00 Live The Hundred: Sunrisers Leeds Men v London Spirit Men (Start-time **6.30**). From Headingley
9.30pm-4.00am Live Tennis The Canadian Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Seventies
4.00 Discovering: Richard Harris
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2021
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A retired hitman tries to protect his wife
8.00 The World in a Painting: Velazquez's Chili Pepper The story behind the pepper in Velázquez's Christ in the House of Martha and Mary
9.15 Beyond the Brush Botticelli's The Birth of Venus
9.45 Beyond the Brush Exploring Da Vinci's The Last Supper
10.15 Wonderland: Gothic
11.15-12.15am The Movies

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.35 pm Magnum, PI Thomas goes home for a family funeral
2.35 Dempsey and Makepeace The duo pose as terrorists
3.45 Boon The team guard a pheasant shoot
4.50 The Professionals Bodie and Doyle must protect a witnesses
5.55 Minder Terry shelters a fugitive
7.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole joins the Harley Owners Group for a ride
8.00 World Rally Championship Highlights Action from the Rally Finland
9.00 Ice Road Truckers Alex's trailer becomes detached in the wilds of Manitoba
10.00 All Elite Wrestling: Collision Hard-hitting wrestling action
12.00-12.55am Dark Side of the Ring The troubled mind of Chris Benoit

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor USA Rob Lowe hosts the game show
8.00 The 1% Club Quiz
9.00 Olivia Attwood: The Price of Perfection New series. Olivia meets stars owning their surgery wins, regrets and freebies
10.00 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

2.30pm-5.45 Live Tour de France Women Stage four
9.00 UFC: Ultimate Fighter
10.00 What Went Down
10.15 British Superbikes
10.30 MLB Highlights
11.30 MLB Lead Off
12.00m't-3.30am Live MLB: Chicago Cubs v Los Angeles Dodgers (Start-time **1.05**)

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me From Dumfries and Galloway
3.20 Four in a Bed Back-to-back editions
5.50 Car S.O.S Tim Shaw and Fuzz Townshend rescue a 1992 VW Corrado in Huddersfield
6.50 Car S.O.S Tim Shaw and Fuzz Townshend rescue a 1973 Dennis fire engine
7.55 Grand Designs A modern treehouse in Gloucestershire
9.00 Oti and Richard's South African Odyssey Oti and Richard meet a community of African penguins
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A tree surgeon is rushed into resus after falling 25ft
11.05-12.10am 24 Hours in A&E A 22-year-old is rushed in with stab wounds to his face and arm

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Neighbours
3.00 Pie in the Sky Drama (S5, ep6)
4.05 Lovejoy (S5, ep11)
5.20 As Time Goes By Comedy (S1, ep4)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S1, ep6)
6.35 Last of the Summer Wine (S1, ep7)
7.15 Last of the Summer Wine Compo's lucky rabbit's foot causes problems (S2, ep1)
8.00 'Allo 'Allo! The Resistance plans to hide stolen money down Rene's trousers
8.30 'Allo 'Allo! Rene gets rid of the money and tries to dispose of the microfilm
9.05 'Allo 'Allo! Alfonse is whisked to hospital
9.35 New Tricks The squad reinvestigates the death of a timeshare magnate (S6, ep5)
10.55-12.10am Luther A gunman murders uniformed police officers (S1, ep2)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Green Planet
8.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
9.00 Bangers & Cash Derek collects an Opel Manta
10.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A 1956 Siva Tourer

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.25pm Heated Rivalry (2/6)
7.30 True Detective: Night Country Thriller (S4, ep6)
9.00 Gomorrah: The Origins Crime drama prequel (3/6)
10.00 Gomorrah: The Origins Crime drama prequel (4/6)
11.00 Prisoner (6/6)
12.00-1.10am True Detective: Night Country (S4, ep1)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.05 pm Drums Along the Mohawk (PG, 1939) John Ford's historical drama starring Henry Fonda
3.10 The Mark of Zorro (PG, 1974) Swashbuckling adventure starring Frank Langella
4.45 Rat Race (12, 2001) Comedy starring Rowan Atkinson
6.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem (PG, 2023) Animated fantasy with the voice of Nicolas Cantu
9.00 My Stepmother Is an Alien (15, 1988) A widowed scientist's research draws him into a romance with an alien sent to Earth on a mission. Sci-fi comedy starring Kim Basinger
11.15-1.25am Under the Skin (15, 2013) Sci-fi drama starring Scarlett Johansson

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm FILM Appointment with Venus (U, 1951) Second World War comedy starring David Niven
3.20 Anthony Perkins: The Actor Behind the Door Profile of the actor
4.25 FILM Chase a Crooked Shadow (U, 1957) Thriller starring Richard Todd
6.10 What's on TPTV with Noel
6.25 Whiplash
6.55 The Man from UNCLE Kuryakin infiltrates a prison camp
7.55 Buccaneer Burton's shipping deal begins to look a bit suspicious
9.00 FILM Accident (PG, 1967) Drama starring Dirk Bogarde
11.05 Fortean TV A miracle fish that cure disease
11.40-1.55am FILM Body Double (18, 1984) Thriller starring Melanie Griffith

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.50pm Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall The Aztecs
7.50 Pirates: Behind the Legends Blackbeard
8.50 Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation
10.00 Hitler's Gold The Nazi "economic miracle"
11.00-12.00 Pirates: Behind the Legends Blackbeard

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes The 1986 disaster
9.00 The Salisbury Poisonings: A Spy Next Door New series. A nerve agent attack. **See Pick of the Day**
10.40-12.50am FILM 2000 Meters to Andriivka (15, 2025) A Ukrainian platoon attempts to liberate a village

Wednesday 5

★ Picks of the day

Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit
BBC4, 8.55pm

Beard looks back at one of her classics

In 2016 Mary Beard presented *Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit*, a series that set out to ask how "a piddling little cattle town in central Italy" became an imperial mega-power. Here, the classicist, *above*, shares memories of working on the series, discussing how she wanted to underline the diversity and reach of the Roman Empire. The first episode is repeated tonight at 9.10pm, exploring Rome's earliest origins as a place of asylum for exiles and outsiders, before Beard heads to Greece and France. First, though, hear her reminisce about filming the show, recalling terrible weather, an embarrassing attempt at reading an inscription lying down outside Seville Cathedral, and the historical use of pizza. **Victoria Segal**

Voices of the Valleys
Sky Arts/Now, 8pm

"It's the sound of pride and identity... it's a brotherhood." So says one of the members of a Welsh male-voice choir that is featured in this stirring three-part documentary series. It follows three choirs, hailing from different parts of Wales, and their conductors (one of whom is a woman) as they all prepare for key events in the choral calendar. A male-voice choir is divided into four sections — top tenor, second tenor, first bass, second bass — and when they come together at full throttle it can send shivers down your spine. As with all docuseries of this ilk, it is as much about the people as their craft, painting a picture of life in Wales and some of the problems facing men in deindustrialised communities. **Joe Clay**

Tune in: members of a Welsh male-voice choir featured in the series

Extraordinary Extensions
Channel 4, 8pm

Two very different builds are featured in this episode, as Tinie Tempah meets a couple who are transforming their home into a Marbella-inspired luxury resort, complete with pool house, nightclub, wellness space and outdoor kitchen. Lucky neighbours. Meanwhile, in southwest London, we follow the progress of a couple who want to bring a taste of experimental Chinese-timber architecture to their terraced home. **JC**

The Funeral Home Horror
BBC2, 10pm

In 2025 Robert Bush, owner of Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull, was charged with preventing 30 "lawful and decent" burials and fraud relating to the ashes of many more. This edition of *The Big Cases* follows the investigation and recent trial, with shocking footage of the police raids that uncovered 35 decomposing bodies, 167 sets of human ashes and widespread fraud. Some of the betrayed families feature. **JC**

This week's seven-day radio guide Pages 42-43

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Animal Park (r)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back A stolen £2,500 e-bike (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Sarah Moore tries to trick the eye by updating a display cabinet
2.45 Escape to the Country Buyers seek a move from the USA to the East Midlands (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room A small package holding 400 years of fascinating history is revealed
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

A trip to Albert Square (7.30pm)

7.00 The One Show Presented by Alex Jones and Vernon Kay
7.30 EastEnders Mark tries to win Lauren's attention, while Mo and Jean search for ways to ease their money troubles
8.00 The Repair Shop Experts restore a pair of original seats from Arsenal's Highbury stadium, a broken locket from the Second World War, a shop ledger from 1909 and a chapel from a model village (r)
9.00 Murder 24/7 (2/2) The documentary follows police attempts to build a case against Matthew Jonathan for the murder — and the bloody footprint that provided a breakthrough (6/8)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 FILM You're Cordially Invited (15, 2025) Two different wedding parties discover they have been accidentally booked on the same day at the same dream venue. Comedy starring Will Ferrell and Reese Witherspoon
12.25 am The Hit List Celebrity Special Chloe Burrows, Aitch, Gladiators Sabre and Nitro, Lisa Riley and Dominic Brunt take part in the quiz show (r)
1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead
1.15 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Money for Nothing (r)
7.15 The Bidding Room (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Great Japanese Railway Journeys (r) (SL)
8.30 Great Continental Railway Journeys (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Trivia-based quiz (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? Vernon Kay puts the spotlight on his hometown of Bolton (r)
2.45 Live Cricket: The Hundred: Trent Rockets Women v Birmingham Phoenix Women (Start-time **3.00**). Coverage of the match from Trent Bridge in Nottingham. The Phoenix won the toss and elected to bat when these teams faced each other at Edgbaston last year, resulting in their victory

Stand-up from Josh Pugh (9.30pm)

6.00 Live Cricket: The Hundred: Trent Rockets Men v Birmingham Phoenix Men (Start-time **6.30**). Coverage of the match from Trent Bridge in Nottingham. The Rockets claimed a six-wicket victory when these teams clashed at Edgbaston last season, thanks largely to the efforts of fast bowler Lockie Ferguson who three wickets with his 20 balls and helped restrict the Phoenix to 122/6, which the Rockets surpassed with 22 balls to spare
9.30 Live at the Apollo Ria Lina introduces stand-up by Lucy Beaumont and Josh Pugh at Hammersmith Apollo (2/7) (r)
10.00 The Big Cases: The Funeral Home Horror Documentary. **See Pick of the Day**
10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis, with Victoria Derbyshire
11.05 Uncanny A student house believed to be haunted by a malevolent entity, which is one of the most unsettling cases Danny Robins has come across (3/3) (r)
12.05 am The Devil in the Family: The Fall of Ruby Franke Ruby starts to banish members of the family from their home (r)
12.55 Sign Zone: Amityville: An Origin Story Ronnie DeFeo Jr is accused of murder (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and the team are in Oldham, where Simon Schneider is squeezed to splash the cash for some stunning candle sticks (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts as another contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order to win a life-changing prize (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning £10,000 (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Quiz host Jeremy Clarkson (9pm)

7.30 Deal or No Deal: Banker's Best Battles Stephen Mulhern revisits memorable battles
8.00 Emmerdale A decision is made to give the dog a good Dingle send-off
8.30 Coronation Street Sean publicly accuses Brody of attacking Dylan
9.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Big-prize quiz hosted by Jeremy Clarkson in which more contestants answer questions that could change their lives (r)
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell investigate the cases of foundlings from 1983 and 1960 (r)
11.45 The Assembly (5/8) (r)
12.10 am Teleshopping
3.00 Love & Death (r) (SL)
3.50 Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel (r) (SL)
4.15 Unwind with ITV
5.35 Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy Truffles in Umbria (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm News **7.30** Home of the Year 2024 (r) **8.00** Island Crossings (r) **9.00** David Wilson's Crime Files (r) **10.00** River City **10.30** Icons of Football (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** Des Doesn't Do (r) **BBC1 Wales 8.00pm** Shift the Thrift (r) **8.30-9.00** Our Lives: The Last Miner in the Band **10.40** Cancer Cure or Con? **11.00 FILM You're Cordially Invited (2025)** **12.45-1.30am** The Hit List Celebrity Special (r) **BBC2 N Ireland 9.30-10.00pm** The Band. Ed and Violet Kenny share their emigration story. Last in the series (r) **BBC1 Scotland 12.25am** Scotcast (r) **12.55** The Hit List Celebrity Special (r) **1.40** Weather

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Jason Sudeikis stars in season four of Ted Lasso
Apple TV

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA In Georgetown, Texas (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown With Ade Adepitan
3.00 A Place in the Sun A couple search for a permanent home in Almeria, Spain (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith Sinkholes emerge around Elizabethan Pitchford Hall in Shropshire (r)
5.00 Château DIY New owners discover a nasty a surprise behind their wood panelling (r)
6.00 American Pickers Mike makes a move on Gypsy Grandma, the queen of arcade games at a Louisiana warehouse (r)

Extraordinary Extensions (8pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Extraordinary Extensions A couple who are turning their Surrey home into a Marbella-inspired party pad, complete with dance floor and pool house. **See Pick of the Day**

9.00 The Undeclared War Barbara comes under Charlie's scrutiny as tragedy strikes GCHQ. Danny, Saara and Roz try to help Vadim escape, and Danny makes an earth-shattering discovery (5/6)

10.00 The Undeclared War Danny puts everything on the line in order to right some wrongs, and Roz and the team race against the clock to find out what the malware is searching for. Last in the series (6/6)

11.00 24 Hours in A&E A 21-year-old man is rushed in after a motorbike accident leaving him with leg and lung injuries. A 69-year-old, who has locked-in-syndrome, has trouble breathing (6/7) (r)

12.05 am Celebrity Hunted (r) (SL)
1.50 Kitchen Nightmares USA 2.40 Dictator: The Hitler Interviews 3.30 Dover 24/7: Britain's Busiest Port 4.30 Grand Designs 5.20 Love It or List It:
5.50 Countdown Gameshow (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.15 FILM A Town Called Murder (PG, TVM, 2023) A couple break down on a road trip through the desert, and as they head to a nearby town, one of them goes missing. Thriller starring Kayleigh Ruller
4.00 Castle An old schoolfriend of Castle is murdered (r)
4.55 Love Nature The colony of Atlantic puffins on St Kilda in the Outer Hebrides (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Majorca: A Year in the Sun Cameras focus on chef Marc Fosh, who celebrates the best of Majorca's produce (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Surgeon Peter Monksfield (9pm)

7.00 Car Pound Cops Following cars as they are seized for a variety of offences (6/8) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts Paramedics rush in a 70-year-old with a dangerously low heart rate, and a former nurse is brought in with a suspected dislocated ankle. Last in the series (10/10)

9.00 999: Critical Condition A patient arrives potentially paralysed following a car crash and another faces life-threatening surgery to remove a tumour from his head

10.00 Ambulance: Code Red Paramedics respond to calls of a man who has collapsed in a hotel bathroom, a head on collision between two motorcyclists, and a woman with a broken leg (r)

11.05 Cause of Death Lancashire Police investigate when the body of a man is found in a field, part of his ear is missing and he is discovered to be laid on top of his wellington boots (8/10) (r)

12.05 am A&E After Dark (r)
1.00 Teleshopping (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.35 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Programmes

1.45-6.00am BBC News **STV 9.00-10.00pm** Coroner: STV Player Presents **12.10-3.00am** Shop **4.15-5.35am** Unwind **UTV 7.30-8.00pm** On the Ground **10.45** Fleadh **11.15** Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel. The hostelry's CEO arrives

11.45-12.10am Deal or No Deal: Banker's Best Battles. Stephen Mulhern presents **S4C 5.30pm** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **7.30** News **7.50** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **9.30** Pawb a'i Farn **10.30** Y Babell Lên 2026 **11.00-12.05am** Ty Ffit (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Great British Railway Journeys Exploring York
7.30 Wainwright Walks Scaling Blencathra
8.00 The Treasures of Ancient Rome How the Romans' obsession with sex and violence reflects in their art (2/3)
8.55 Mary Beard Remembers: Ultimate Rome – Empire Without Limit The historian looks back to her 2016 documentary series. **See Pick of the Day**
9.10 Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit The myths of the Roman Empire. **See Pick of the Day** (1/4)
10.10 I, Claudius A marriage is arranged for Claudius (3/12)
11.05 I, Claudius (4/12)
11.55-12.55am The Treasures of Ancient Rome (2/3)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A body is found surrounded by symbols (S22, ep6)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.05 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street
5.15 Classic Coronation Street
5.50 Heartbeat Sergeant Merton is suspended
6.55 Heartbeat Burglaries plague Aidensfield
8.00 Midsomer Murders A land dispute leads to murder (S13, ep3)
10.00 Grantchester A student from a prestigious all-female college is found dead (S5, ep1)
11.00 Grantchester Will and Leonard witness a deadly and deliberate hit-and-run (S5, ep2)
11.50-12.50am Trial & Retribution When a teacher is found dead, her boyfriend is arrested (S10, ep5)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60
7.30 Deadly 60
8.00 Top Gear
9.00 Top Gear
10.00 Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee
10.50 Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee
11.40-12.05am Dinosaur

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

11.30am Live The Hundred: Manchester Super Giants Women v Welsh Fire Women
2.30pm Live The Hundred: Manchester Super Giants Men v Welsh Fire Men
6.00 Live The Hundred: Trent Rockets Men v Birmingham Phoenix Men (Start-time **6.30**)
9.30-4.00am Live Tennis

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Seventies
4.00 Discovering: James Coburn
5.00 Best of Portrait Artist of the Year 2021
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A man ends up with amnesia after being hit on the head
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A wounded killer tries to get a prescription filled
8.00 Voices of the Valleys Following three male voice choirs from across Wales. **See Pick of the Day**
9.00 Bryn Terfel: Celtic Beethoven Arrangements of Beethoven's Scottish, Irish and Welsh folk songs
10.25-12.25am Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.35 pm Magnum, PI Robin organises a treasure hunt
2.35 Dempsey and Makepeace A witness's child is kidnapped
3.40 Boon A prize stallion is stolen
4.50 The Professionals Mercenaries and guerrillas wage war
5.55 Minder Arthur cashes in on a footballer's disappearance
7.00 Aussie Pickers A memorable collection of Aussie memorabilia
8.00 Beat the Chasers: Celebrity Special Nish Kumar, Chris McCausland, Mary Earps and Alexander Armstrong take part
9.00 FILM RoboCop (18, 1987) Sci-fi thriller starring Peter Weller, Nancy Allen, Ronny Cox and Miguel Ferrer
11.05-1.05am All Elite Wrestling: Collision

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor USA
8.00 The 1% Club
9.00 Family Guy Brian and Stewie use a remote control to visit alternative realities
9.30 Family Guy
10.00 Family Guy
10.30 Family Guy
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

12.30pm -5.45pm Live Tour de France Women
7.15-10.00 Live MLB: Chicago Cubs v Los Angeles Dodgers (Start-time **7.20**)
12.00m't -3.00am Live MLB: New York Yankees v St Louis Cardinals (Start-time **12.05**)
3.30-6.30am Live World Series of Poker

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me South London
2.15 Come Dine with Me
2.50 Come Dine with Me
3.20 Four in a Bed
3.50 Four in a Bed
4.20 Four in a Bed
4.50 Four in a Bed
5.20 Four in a Bed
5.50 Car S.O.S.
6.50 Car S.O.S. Tim Shaw and Fuzz Townshend take on a 1963 Citroën HY Van
7.55 Grand Designs A home shaped like two enormous periscopes in Norfolk
9.00 The Roman Empire by Train with Alice Roberts Exploring key sites of the Roman empire
10.00 24 Hours in Police Custody: The Butcher of Suburbia The inside story of the murder of a 74-year-old woman
11.05-12.10am 24 Hours In Police Custody: The Butcher of Suburbia

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Neighbours
2.30 Neighbours
3.00 Pie in the Sky
4.05 Lovejoy A rare Bible is discovered in Cambridge (S5, ep12)
5.20 As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S2, ep2)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S2, ep3)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Compo gets a chance to impress Nora Batty (S2, ep4)
8.00 Sister Boniface Mysteries Sister Boniface investigates a murder at a pirate radio station (S2, ep8)
9.00 The Chelsea Detective Emma denies murdering her father (S2, ep6)
10.00 New Tricks The squad reinvestigates the disappearance of a political activist. With Phil Daniels (S6, ep6)
11.20-12.40am Luther The detective faces suspension (S1, ep3)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Green Planet
8.00 Michael Palin: Travels of a Lifetime Around the World in 80 Days
9.00 Simon Reeve's South America Peru and Bolivia
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.50pm The Penguin Crime drama with Colin Farrell (1/8)
7.55 The Penguin Sofia works to secure her family's strength (2/8)
9.00 House of the Dragon Game of Thrones prequel starring Matt Smith (S3, ep7)
10.15 Station Eleven (3/10)
11.15-12.15am Station Eleven

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.55 pm Monkey Business (U, 1952) Comedy starring Cary Grant
2.50 Siege at Red River (U, 1954) Western starring Van Johnson
4.35 Heaven Knows, Mr Allison (PG, 1957) Romantic drama starring Robert Mitchum and Deborah Kerr
6.40 Steel Magnolias (PG, 1989) Drama, with Sally Field and Julia Roberts
9.00 Speed (15, 1994) A cop tries to save the passengers on a bus that is wired to explode if it goes below 50mph. Action thriller starring Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock, Dennis Hopper and Jeff Daniels
11.15-2.00am Ambulance (15, 2022) Crime drama starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.45 pm FILM Up in the World (U, 1956) Comedy starring Norman Wisdom
3.30 Look at Life
3.45 Dial 999 A gang uses a tourist barge as a getaway vehicle
4.20 FILM The Bells Go Down (U, 1943) Second World War comedy starring Tommy Trinder and James Mason
6.10 So This Is London
6.30 Give Us a Clue Guests include Rula Lenska, Anna Quayle and Spike Milligan
7.00 Out of Town
7.30 Travelling Man Lomax is closing in on the man who framed him
8.35 An Englishman Abroad Drama starring Alan Bates
9.50-12.10am FILM From Here to Eternity (PG, 1953) Second World War drama starring Burt Lancaster

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.50pm Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall
7.50 Pirates: Behind the Legends Anne Bonny
8.50 Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation
10.00 Hitler's Gold
11.00 Pirates: Behind the Legends Anne Bonny
12.00-1.15am Iron Curtain...

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm The Alien Autopsy Scandal Documentary
8.00 Blur: To the End Documentary about the band
10.00 Groomed: The Truth Behind the Lie
11.00 Murder at the Post Office Diana Garbutt in 2010
12.00-1.00am Murder at the Post Office Documentary

Thursday 6

★ Picks of the day

Possession
Sky Atlantic/Now, 9pm/10pm

A supernatural legal thriller set in Jamaica

Gugu Mbatha-Raw, *above*, stars in this supernatural thriller as Claudia, a biracial lawyer dispatched from Bristol to Jamaica. Her job there is to protect the right of Oliver (Jonny Lee Miller) to inherit his family's estate, in the face of a claim that his late father left it to the mysterious Cudjoe East (Sheldon Shepherd). Gothic tropes abound in Claudia's first visit to Hope Hill, and soon another narrative emerges on the same plantation when a slave revolt is put down. Linking the twin storylines, Cudjoe claims to be from this faraway era, and condemned to wander through time. At first the script seems predictable, but the storytelling improves once *Possession* unmasks itself as *Sinners*-like horror as well as modern legal parable. **John Dugdale**

The Very Best of Peter Sellers
Sky Arts/Now, 9pm

In 1958 *The Best of Peter Sellers* was released, an album of audio spoofs of newfangled things such as pop music and TV. Put together with rather less aplomb, *The Very Best of Peter Sellers* was released in 1990, ten years after Sellers' death, and tried to do the same for his screen career. While it's another dazzling display of versatility, it leans heavily towards his later movies — international, in colour, and mostly overtly out to get laughs — with clips from the *Pink Panther* series and even from *What's New Pussycat?*, a Swinging Sixties shambles. Arguably, though, his "very best" performances were in black and white (such as *Lolita* and *Dr Strangelove*), were somewhere on the spectrum between drama and dark comedy, and/or were in films made for British audiences, such as *I'm All Right Jack*. **JD**

More than just The Pink Panther: the actor and comedian Peter Sellers

Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 9pm

The Olympic heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson has always felt "stuck in between two sides". Her father, Ricky, was from the Bahamas, and Johnson-Thompson spent the first year of her life there, before her parents separated and she moved to Liverpool. She heads to the Bahamas in search of her roots, before her journey takes her to Miami, uncovering a succession of distant relatives who worked to better themselves. **Joe Clay**

Christopher Reeve: Keeping Hope in Motion
BBC4, 10.15pm

Christopher Reeve's son Matthew updated this Emmy-nominated documentary in 2007, chronicling the actor's gruelling rehabilitation after a 1995 riding accident that left him paralysed from the neck down. Shot over two years, the film demonstrates his indomitable spirit. "I don't want to be melodramatic," he said in 2004, a few months before his death. "But I'm 51 and the clock is ticking... I don't want to be a senior citizen before I'm cured." **JC**

This week's streaming guide Pages 22-24

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Animal Park A wallaby (r)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back Tracking a stolen caravan (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Jacqui Joseph upcycles a display unit
2.45 Escape to the Country A couple look for a new home in West Yorkshire (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room Dealers bid for a football game, steps, a map and a Noh mask (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Katarina Johnson-Thompson (9pm)

7.00 The One Show Magazine show presented by Alex Jones and Roman Kemp

7.30 EastEnders Sheila faces mounting pressure. Priya is confronted with hard truths

8.00 Fake or Fortune? The art detectives head to Somerset, where 15 unsigned prints of Lucian Freud's etching Girl with Fig Leaf have been discovered in a garage (4/4)

9.00 Who Do You Think You Are? ★ Katarina Johnson-Thompson travels to the Bahamas and Miami in search of her ancestry, and discovers tales of resilience and courage. **See Pick of the Day** (8/8)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News

10.40 Murder 24/7 The first of a two-part investigation into the 2025 murder of 54-year-old Hereford man Jamie Gawler, found in his flat having being beaten to death (5/8) (r)

11.40 Murder 24/7 Part two of two. Police struggle to build a case — until a bloody footprint is found at the scene (6/8) (r)

12.40 am Alan Carr's Picture Slam Contestants from Lancashire, Birmingham and Cardiff (r)
1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead
1.30 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.15 am Homes Under the Hammer Kent, Cumbria and Derby (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World Refreshing the borders (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games With Sean Fletcher (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation The duo bake in France (r)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown A prize at the Mid Devon Show is vital (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow The team visits Toronto (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Ickworth House near Bury St Edmunds (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games With panellists Gethin Jones, Tiff Stevenson, Kate Thornton and Gary Wilmot (r)

Drama Women Talking (11.05pm)

7.00 Escape to the Country A pair of budding entrepreneurs seek to move to the Cotswolds. They have a generous budget, but the property must have the potential to develop a boutique country holiday let (r)

8.00 Digging for Britain Archaeological treasures in the west of Britain, including a rare medieval cemetery, a disappearing Mesolithic landscape and the ruins of a gothic masterpiece (3/6) (r)

9.00 The Devil in the Family: The Fall of Ruby Franke With the Franke family isolated, people on the outside try to find out what is happening (3/3)

9.50 The Fens: A Wild Year (2/3) (r)

10.00 Inside No 9 A detective is determined to crack the case of a missing boy (3/6) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Analysis of the day's events presented by Paddy O'Connell

11.05 FILM Women Talking (15, 2022) In 2010, the women of an isolated religious community grapple with reconciling a brutal reality with their faith. Drama starring Rooney Mara

12.40 am Sign Zone: Ambulance A young patient is reported to be having a seizure in a forest, but paramedics are struggling to locate her (r) (SL)
1.40 Evolution The story of the evolution of the bat (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and his team are in Sheffield, where Mark Stevens meets his match, and Tracy Thackray-Howitt splashes some serious cash (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Bradley Walsh hosts as contestants from Oldham, Essex, Gloucester and Scunthorpe hope they can take home thousands of pounds together (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy (7.30pm)

7.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy Tom learns how farmers produce tomatoes for passata

8.00 Emmerdale Charity takes big steps, and the Dingles unite in their grief at Monty's funeral

8.30 Coronation Street Kit extends an ominous invitation to Gary. Lauren offers Betsy an apology

9.00 The Chase Around the World The teams land in Paris to take on the Vixen and the Beast, who have set a series of questions that the players must solve to find Bradley Walsh at the finish line (4/6)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News

10.45 FILM Casino Royale (15, 2006) James Bond pursues an international criminal responsible for financing terrorist organisations across the world. Spy thriller starring Daniel Craig, Eva Green and Mads Mikkelsen

1.10 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Summit The group is reduced from 14 to 11 (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special Broadcaster Zoe Ball takes on the Banker (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.30** Hidden Lives (r) **8.00** Beechgrove Garden **8.30** Scotland's Greatest Escape (r) **9.00** Granite Harbour. Lindo and Bart face a race against time to find the real killer. Last in the series **10.00** Scot Squad (r) **10.30** Cumming to the Cabaret (r) **10.55** Cumming to the Cabaret (r) **11.15** Scotcast **11.45pm-Midnight** Hannah Laing: Follow the Rave (r)

BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm The Crime I Can't Forget. The case of a mother and daughter who died in a fire in September 1992 (r) **11.30** Murder 24/7. The 2025 murder of a Hereford man (r) **12.30-1.30am** Murder 24/7. Police struggle to build a case (r)

The best of the week's films on TV

Pages 26-27

Miranda Richardson stars in Dance with a Stranger
Film4, 11.40pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA A Texas eatery (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway Two strangers buy a bungalow at auction in Glossop (r)
2.10 Countdown With Ade Adepitan
3.00 A Place in the Sun Craig Rowe helps a couple buy a holiday home in southern Tenerife (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith A derelict pond in the Cotswolds (r)
5.00 Château DIY At the Château de Brives, the wedding business is upgraded (r)
6.00 American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz come across a huge private collection (r)

Renovation Rescue (8pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Renovation Rescue In West Sussex, Vogue Williams and Luke Mabbott help to salvage an artist's dream of a relaxing retirement near her daughter and grandchildren by the sea

9.00 Murder Case: The Digital Detectives How detectives used digital forensics to uncover the events of the night Matthew Daulby was fatally stabbed after a street fight in Ormskirk in July 2023

10.00 The Body Detectives The work of an organisation dedicated to revisiting forgotten cases, beginning with the disappearance of a man off the Norfolk coast in 1984 while on holiday (1/3) (r)

11.05 Social Media Monsters Examining serious crimes where social media has played a significant role, including interviews with victims and input from experts (1/10) (r)

12.05 am Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (SL) **1.00 Murder Case: The Digital Detectives** (r) (SL)
1.55 Hotel Hell (r) (SL) **2.45 The Undeclared War** (r) (SL)
4.30-4.55 Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds (r) (SL)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM Evil in a Small Town (PG, TVM, 2023) When her parents go missing on a family vacation, a teenager must find them — but she may be trusting the wrong people. Thriller with Veronica Ramirez
4.00 Castle Part one of two. A murder case is linked to serial killer Jerry Tyson (r)
4.55 Love Nature An initiative encouraging children to engage in outdoor play (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Menorca: A Year in the Sun Part one of two. A profile of the Mediterranean island (r)
6.55 5 News Update

John Hannah stars (9pm)

7.00 Around the World in First Class with Josie Gibson Josie flies upper class to Grenada, and explores a tucked-away resort by the sea (2/4)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Cornwall: A Year by the Sea At Watergate Bay, Michelin-starred chef Chris Eden and his team attempt their first beach feast of the summer. Last in the series

9.00 Benidorm Is Murder A rooftop murder exposes old grudges and buried secrets at a struggling, debt-ridden comedy club. Drama starring John Hannah (2/6)

10.00 Killer at the Crime Scene In a Silicon Valley home invasion, millionaire Raveesh Kumra is murdered. No forced entry leads investigators to suspect an inside job (r)

11.00 Murdered at First Sight Investigating the case of Jorge Rodriguez, a father of three and soon-to-be grandfather, who was shot while in his car and later died in hospital in 2017 (2/10) (r)

12.05 am Street Cops: Catching the Yobs (r) **1.00 Cruise TV** (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.35 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows (r) (SL)

BBC2 N Ireland 11.05pm Fleadh Folk (r) **12.00midnight-1.40am FILM Women Talking (2022) BBC1 Scotland 7.00-7.30pm** River City (r) **12.40am** Scotcast (r) **1.10** Alan Carr's Picture Slam (r) **1.55** Weather **2.00-6.00am** BBC News

STV 1.10-3.00am Shop on TV **3.50-5.05am** Unwind with STV **S4C 5.00pm** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026. Including the group step dance and folk song parties **7.30** News **7.50** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **10.30** Y Babell Lên 2026 **11.00-12.05am** Yr Afon (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Great British Railway Journeys Michael Portillo travels from Northallerton to Chester-Le-Street. Last in the series
7.30 Pubs, Ponds and Power: The Story of the Village Ben Robinson explores the history of Cromford in Derbyshire (5/6)
8.00 FILM Superman (PG, 1978) An alien crash-lands on Earth, becoming a crusader for justice. Comic-strip adventure with Christopher Reeve
10.15 Christopher Reeve: Keeping Hope in Motion The actor's fight to regain his ability to breathe on his own. **See Pick of the Day**
11.15-12.15am Parkinson With Mel Smith, Kenneth Griffith and Christopher Reeve

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A survivalist is found murdered in his bombproof shelter (S23, ep1)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat A shooting party masks a sinister plot
6.55 Heartbeat David inherits a ventriloquist's dummy
8.00 Vera The detective investigates the murder of a homeless young man
10.00 Grantchester Will and Ellie encounter a murder on a trip to the cinema (S5, ep3)
11.00 Grantchester A young man is found dead and stark naked out on the Fens (S5, ep4)
11.50-12.55am Trial & Retribution Walker brings Milton on to the investigation to help (S10, ep6)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60 Double bill
8.00 Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon Members of a farming family declutter
9.00-12.10am Better Date than Never A chance to see the series in which a group of people take their first steps into the dating scene

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

3.00pm Live The Hundred: London Spirit Women v MI London Women (Start-time **3.00**). From Lord's in London
6.00 Live The Hundred: London Spirit Men v MI London Men (Start-time **6.30**)
9.30-4.00am Live Tennis Coverage from day five of the Canadian Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Eighties
4.00 Discovering: Dean Martin
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2022
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Voices of the Valleys Following three male voice choirs from across Wales
8.00 Discovering: Bruce Willis The life and career of the American actor
9.00 The Very Best of Peter Sellers A celebration of the comedy actor's remarkable career. **See Pick of the Day**
10.10 Spike Milligan: The Unseen Archive Recently unearthed film and interviews
11.45-12.45am The Directors A profile of Stanley Donen

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm Magnum, PI Thomas discovers a corpse while diving
2.30 Dempsey and Makepeace A girl is followed home and abducted
3.30 Boon A solicitor is hounded by the press
4.40 The Professionals Bodie is held hostage
5.45 Minder Terry's fingerprints are found on a getaway car
6.50 River Monsters Jeremy Wade searches for the Iliamna Lake monster in Alaska
7.20 River Monsters A freshwater giant said to inhabit Russia's remote Amur River
7.50 Sharpe The soldier is framed for murder
10.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole spends a day training with the Met Police
11.00-12.05am Black Sails Flint returns to retrieve the gold

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor USA Rob Lowe hosts the game show
8.00 The 1% Club Quiz
9.00 Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening With Alison Hammond, Iain Stirling and Carol Vorderman
10.00 Changing Ends
10.35 Family Guy Double bill
11.35-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

2.30pm-5.45 Live Tour de France Women Coverage from the sixth stage of the Grand Tour race
7.00 Live MLB: Milwaukee Brewers v Pittsburgh Pirates (Start-time **7.10**)
10.00 Premier League Stories
10.30 Sign Up: Into Football
11.30-12.30am WRC Review

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me From Boston, Lincolnshire
3.20 Four in a Bed Back-to-back editions
5.50 Car S.O.S Tim and Fuzz take on a carpenter's 1980 Ford Escort RS2000
6.50 Car S.O.S Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a 1994 Vauxhall Cavalier Turbo
7.55 Grand Designs Kevin McCloud meets a couple constructing a black-clad private hideaway in an Essex woodland
9.00 The Reclaimers: Made in Suffolk Andy and Hayley visit Norwich Castle
10.00 24 Hours in A&E Patients who have injured themselves through work or play
11.05-12.10am 24 Hours in A&E An IT consultant who crashed his motorbike

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Neighbours
2.30 Neighbours
3.00 Pie in the Sky Drama (S5, ep8)
4.05 Lovejoy (S5, ep13)
5.20 As Time Goes By Comedy (S1, ep6)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S2, ep5)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S2, ep6)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Compo decides to get out his old motorbike (S2, ep7)
8.00 The Marlow Murder Club A revered member of the sailing club is brutally bludgeoned to death (S2, ep5)
9.00 The Marlow Murder Club Kit's killer sends another violent warning (S2, ep6)
10.00 New Tricks The team investigates a fatal accident (S6, ep7)
11.20-12.40am Luther Serial killer Henry Madsen wakes from his coma (S1, ep4)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Green Planet
8.00 Bangers & Cash A car built in Britain in the '50s for the US market
9.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.50pm The Penguin (3/8)
7.55 The Penguin (4/8)
9.00 Possession New series. Supernatural thriller. **See Pick of the Day** (1/5)
10.00 Possession. **See Pick of the Day** (2/5)
11.00 The Five-Star Weekend (7/8) **11.45-12.45am The Five-Star Weekend** (8/8)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.15 pm The Black Swan (PG, 1942) Swashbuckling adventure with Tyrone Power
3.00 Sign of the Pagan (U, 1954) Historical drama starring Jack Palance
4.50 All That Heaven Allows (U, 1955) Romantic drama starring Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson
6.45 The Electrical Life of Louis Wain (12, 2021) Biographical drama starring Benedict Cumberbatch
9.00 Captain Phillips (12, 2013) The skipper of an American cargo ship is taken hostage by Somalian pirates. Fact-based thriller starring Tom Hanks
11.40-1.45am Dance with a Stranger (15, 1985) Fact-based drama starring Miranda Richardson and Rupert Everett

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm FILM From Here to Eternity (PG, 1953) Second World War drama starring Burt Lancaster
3.55 FILM Odd Man Out (PG, 1947) Thriller with James Mason
6.20 Strange But True The mystery of a haunted bomber
6.55 The Brothers Jennifer accuses Barbara and Mary of ruining any chance she had at happiness
8.00 Mark Saber A man hires Saber to find his missing wife
8.30 The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club Acts include Roy Orbison
9.20 FILM The Horror of Frankenstein (15, 1970) Comedy horror starring Ralph Bates
11.20-1.10am The Strange Case of Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle Stars Douglas Henshall

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.50pm Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall The Americas
7.50 Pirates: Behind the Legends The exploits of Bartholomew Roberts
8.50 Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation
10.00 Hitler's Gold
11.00-12.00m't Pirates: Behind the Legends

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm The Alien Autopsy Scandal The film is released
8.00 Ghislaine Maxwell: Epstein's Shadow The complicated and mysterious life of the former socialite and her relationship with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein
11.10-1.10am An American Bombing: Road to April 19th

Friday 7

★ Picks of the day

The NaNaz: Age Against the Machine
BBC1, 7.30pm

Rocking with the women of a certain rage

Sally Wainwright's BBC drama *Riot Women* wasn't pure fiction: this *Our Lives* documentary follows the NaNaz, a six-piece Welsh punk band who met at a music workshop for women over 50. For some it was a return to a lifelong passion, for others it was the first time they had picked up an instrument. When the course ended, the chemistry between the women was undeniable and the NaNaz were born. They have built a loyal fanbase and released an EP (*NaNafesto*). This cheering film follows them as they prepare to play their fast and very furious songs about injustice and menopausal rage at a New York festival. Having no manager, they must balance their complicated, busy lives with the desire to rock. **Victoria Segal**

Tony Bennett night
BBC4, from 9.45pm

Frank Sinatra once called Tony Bennett "the best singer in the business", but he was never quite part of the Rat Pack, instead a New York jazz stylist closer to Duke Ellington and Count Basie. He outlasted them all, possessed of a sensitivity and a staying power with which he carried the Great American Songbook into the 21st century via his duets with Amy Winehouse and Lady Gaga. Tonight's programming celebrates the centenary of his birth, most of it hailing from his 1979 *Tony Bennett Sings* heyday, featuring songs from the movies, from Broadway, Tin Pan Alley and his own hits. They are bookended by his

Tony Bennett performing in New York City in 1996

London Palladium: BBC Sessions from 2011 and a 1996 documentary about his native New York. **Victoria Segal**

Live EFL Cup
ITV1, 7.30pm

With the World Cup behind us, humdrum football returns with an early fixture in the competition won in March by Manchester City. With Premier League sides entering later, it brings together two Championship clubs who will be vying for promotion in 2026-27 after narrowly missing out last year. Wrexham were just below the play-off places, while Middlesbrough lost the Championship play-off final. **John Dugdale**

Gardeners' World
BBC2, 8pm

Mary Berry is tonight's special guest, spending the day at Damson Farm near Bath with Frances Tophill. The beloved TV cook proves that her expertise stretches beyond the kitchen as she offers practical gardening advice, reminisces about her youth in Bath and helps to celebrate a harvest of fruit and vegetables. Elsewhere there are visits to an urban edible garden in London, a Punjabi allotment community and a city wildlife sanctuary. **VS**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Animal Park (r)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back Expensive farmyard vehicles are tracked to a scrapyard (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt: 20 Years of The One Show
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 The Hairdresser Mysteries Lily has a hairstyle emergency and a murder to solve
2.45 Escape to the Country A home in Cornwall (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room Unusual characters enter the room
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Drama Granite Harbour (8pm)

7.00 The One Show Weekday magazine show presented by Alex Jones and Roman Kemp

7.30 Our Lives Cameras follow South Wales punk band the NaNaz. **See Pick of the Day**

8.00 Granite Harbour As the case reaches a conclusion, Lindo and Bart face a race against time to find the real killer as long-held secrets are finally revealed. Last in series (3/3)

9.00 Would I Lie to You? With Cush Jumbo, Judi Love, Grayson Perry and Tim Vine (4/9) (r)

9.30 Ann Droid Sue decides to invite Michael and Renee to a nice family dinner (4/6)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News

10.45 FILM 28 Days Later (18, 2002) Survivors band together after Britain is devastated by a virus that leaves victims consumed with homicidal rage. Danny Boyle's horror starring Cillian Murphy, Naomie Harris and Christopher Eccleston

12.30 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.35 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Money for Nothing (r)
7.15 The Bidding Room (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Marcus Wareing Simply Provence (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Trivia-based quiz (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? A Coleraine challenge (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation The duo visit northern Spain (r)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown The Westmorland County Show in Cumbria (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow The team value items in Clitheroe, Lancashire (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Haddon Hall (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Trivia-based quiz (r)
6.30 Just One Thing The benefits of eating beetroot (r)

Frances Tophill (8pm)

7.00 Iolo's Anglesey Iolo Williams explores the flora and fauna of Anglesey (2/4) (r)

7.30 Beechgrove Garden Brian Cunningham harvests his spring vegetables

8.00 Gardeners' World Frances Tophill returns to Damson Farm in Bath and spends the day with owner Alison and guest Mary Berry, while Arit Anderson visits an edible garden. **See Pick of the Day**

9.00 Bergerac Chloe finds some evidence proving that there is some truth in John Blakely's accusations afterall (4/6)

9.45 QI XL Sandi Toksvig hosts, with Ria Lina, Eshaan Akbar, Jimmy Carr and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of tricks and treats (r)

10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis, with Paddy O'Connell

11.05 FILM Hoard (18, 2023) Years after moving away from her hoarding mother, a foster teen revisits her childhood memories and the trauma she repressed. Drama starring Saura Lightfoot-Leon

1.00 am Sign Zone: Britain's Strictest Schools: Panorama Current affairs report (r) (SL)
1.30 The Rapture Gabs and Dick uncover evidence that Leonard is hiding something (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and his dealer den visit Newport. Karen Dalmeny pays big bucks for a stunning brooch, and Laurie Scully conducts a male voice choir (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts as another contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order to win a huge cash prize (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down chutes in the hope of winning £10,000 (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Wrexham's Sam Smith (8pm)

7.30 Live EFL Cup: Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off **8.00**). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the first-round tie at Riverside Stadium. Boro will be looking to avoid a repeat of this stage last season, when they were beaten 4-0 here by Doncaster Rovers. Wrexham fared better in the competition, going on to reach the fourth round before they were eliminated by Welsh rivals Cardiff City following a 2-1 defeat. With analysis from Tommy Smith and Steven Fletcher, and commentary by Seb Hutchinson and Lucy Ward. **See Pick of the Day**

10.25 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News

11.15 FILM Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (12, 2016) The vigilante tries to save an army major who has been framed for murder by a sinister conspiracy. Action thriller sequel starring Tom Cruise and Cobie Smulders

1.10 am Teleshopping
3.00 Force of Nature (r) (SL)
3.50 Long Lost Family (r) (SL)
4.45 Unwind with ITV

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.25** Live Sportscene — Championship: Partick Thistle v Livingston (Kick-off **7.30**)

9.30 Best of Only an Excuse? A selection of sketches picked from the archives of the hit comedy (r) **10.00** Still Game. Jack and Victor acquire a car (r) **10.30** Two Doors Down. Colin turns to his neighbours for support when he is dumped by Cathy (r)

11.00pm-Midnight Rip It Up. The evolution of the Scottish music industry (r)
BBC1 N Ireland 12.30am Alan Carr's Picture Slam. Game show featuring contestants from Lancashire, Birmingham and Cardiff (r) **1.15-6.00am** BBC News

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Ricky Gervais's new animation Alley Cats
Netflix

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA From New Orleans (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway An accountant and a builder buy a house together in Leeds (r)
2.10 Countdown With Ade Adepitan
3.00 A Place in the Sun The search for a holiday home in Cadiz (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith The biggest wedding of the year takes place at Treberfydd House (r)
5.00 Château DIY The owners of Château de Lalacelle bring their garden back to life (r)
6.00 American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz find a rare Superman comic (r)

Comedian Katherine Ryan (9pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich A woman has a non-surgical liquid nose job, one tackles years of sun damage with laser technology, while another invests over £1,000 a month in tweakments (4/6)

9.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy words and numbers quiz, as Rob Beckett and Jon Richardson are joined by Katherine Ryan and Fatiha El-Ghorri

10.00 Big Fat Quiz: Best Bits Victory is snatched from the jaws of humiliation, as comedians including Sara Pascoe, James Acaster and Jamie and Natasia Demetriou taste success against all odds

11.05 Sarah Millican: Home Bird Live Stand-up show that was recorded at Newcastle's Tyne Theatre & Opera House (r)

12.10 am Greg Davies: The Back of My Mum's Head (r)
1.05 Ramy Double bill
2.15 FILM Theater Camp (12, 2023) Comedy with Ben Platt
3.50 Sunday Brunch (r)
4.00 Four in a Bed (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM The Book Club Murders (PG, TVM, 2024) Members of a book club start to receive threatening letters that reveal their darkest secrets. Mystery starring Brittany Underwood
4.00 Castle (2/2) The NYPD and Castle search for Beckett (r)
4.55 Love Nature Discovering how the humble fox should be celebrated not vilified (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Menorca: A Year in the Sun (2/2) A look at Menorca's seafood, art and architectural restorations, including a trip to the north of the island (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Presenter Alexander Armstrong (9pm)

7.00 Tom Read Wilson's Grand Tour The presenter reimagines the rite of passage once undertaken by aristocrats, beginning in Paris (1/3) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Corsica: Jewel of the Mediterranean Cameras focus on the French island which boasts 600 miles of stunning coastline, lush green forests and majestic mountains

9.00 Alexander Armstrong in South Korea The presenter journeys across South Korea, one of the most influential and successful countries on earth, known for its manufacturing strength and cultural exports (r)

10.30 Piers Morgan: Uncensored The bold, opinion-led news and debate show hosted by Piers Morgan. Piers blends journalism and cultural commentary that's unapologetically direct

12.00 am Fare Dodgers (r) **1.00 Teleshopping 2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors** (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.30 Jane McDonald's Yorkshire (r) (SL) **5.25 Entertainment News**
5.35 Children's Programmes

ITV1 Wales 7.00-7.30pm Coast & Country. Including a report on the children learning all about food at Aberglasney
STV 7.00-7.30pm The STV Radio Football Takeover **1.10-3.00am** Shop on TV **4.45-6.00am** Unwind with STV

UTV 7.00-7.30pm UTV Life. Pamela Ballantine presents the best of local chat
S4C 5.30pm Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 **7.30** News **7.50** Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026. The recitation choirs **10.30** Y Babell Lên 2026 **11.00-12.05am** Gwesty Aduniad (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Also Sprach Zarathustra at the Proms Pieces inspired by the sky
8.20 TOTP: 2000
8.45 TOTP: 1984
9.15 TOTP: 1988
9.45 Tony Bennett at the London Palladium: BBC Sessions A 2011 concert. **See Pick of the Day**
10.45 Tony Bennett Sings: Songs from the Movies The crooner performs big-screen songs (1/6) **See Pick of the Day**
11.15 Tony Bennett Sings: His Personal Hit Songbook The singer performs a selection of his favourite songs (2/6) **See Pick of the Day**
11.50-12.20am Tony Bennett Sings: Songs of Broadway Tony turns his talents to the music of Broadway (3/6) **See Pick of the Day**

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A newly arrived resident of a police retirement community is found dead (S23, ep2)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street
5.15 Classic Coronation Street
5.50 Heartbeat Gina is suspected of being a hit-and-run driver
6.55 Heartbeat Tricia and Mike declare their love for each other
8.00 Doc Martin Penhale decides to have a Police Open day to raise community awareness (S8, ep6)
9.00 Doc Martin It is the annual Portwenn versus Port Carran gig race (S8, ep7)
10.00 Grantchester Crime drama (S5, ep5)
11.00 Grantchester Crime drama (S5, ep6)
11.50-12.55am Trial & Retribution (S10, ep7)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 I Am Darren
7.20 FILM Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian (PG, 2009) Fantasy comedy sequel
9.00 Death in Paradise
10.00 Ghosts Australia
10.45-12.10am The Golden Cobra Six editions

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

3.00pm -6.00pm Live The Hundred: Birmingham Phoenix Women v Sunrisers Leeds Women
7.00 Live EFL Cup: Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage from the Riverside Stadium
10.45-4.00am Live Tennis The Canadian Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Eighties
4.00 Discovering: Peter Sellers
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2022
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents An alcoholic actor strangles his friend
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 Bob Dylan: The Other Side of the Mirror The performer's appearances at the Newport Folk Festival from 1963 to 1965
9.35 I Was a Teenage Sex Pistol The story of the punk band
11.20-12.20am Classic Albums The making of Never Mind the B*******, Here's the Sex Pistols

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm Magnum, PI Racketeers target Magnum
2.35 Dempsey and Makepeace An ex-girlfriend weakens Dempsey's concentration
3.45 Boon Ken goes undercover
4.50 The Professionals Bodie and Doyle investigate a crime dating back to 1953
5.50 Minder Arthur and Terry are hired to transport a bull
6.55 Sharpe A Spanish rebel captures British deserters
9.00 FILM RoboCop (18, 1987) A murdered police officer in a future Detroit is rebuilt as a law-enforcing cyborg. Sci-fi thriller starring Peter Weller
11.10-1.30am All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite Hard-hitting wrestling action

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor USA
8.00 The 1% Club Quiz hosted by Lee Mack
9.00 FILM John Wick (15, 2014) A former assassin is provoked into a rage when a criminal kills his dog. Action thriller starring Keanu Reeves
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

10.30am -1.30pm Live AFL: Brisbane Lions v Hawthorn Hawks (Bounce-up **10.40**)
2.15pm -5.15pm Live Tour de France Women Coverage from the seventh stage of the Grand Tour race
12.00-3.00am Live MLB: New York Yankees v Atlanta Braves (Start-time **12.05**)

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me From Guildford
2.15 Come Dine with Me
2.50 Come Dine with Me
3.20 Four in a Bed
3.50 Four in a Bed
4.20 Four in a Bed
4.50 Four in a Bed
5.20 Four in a Bed
5.50 Car S.O.S. Tim and Fuzz take on a 1992 Saab 900 Turbo
6.50 Car S.O.S. Tim and Fuzz are taking on their 100th car and their first electric conversion
7.55 Grand Designs Kevin McCloud revisits the building of an art deco lighthouse tower in Devon
9.00 Carpe Diem New series. French legal drama starring Samuel Le Bihan
10.05 24 Hours in A&E A seven-year-old boy is brought in after falling from a tree
11.10-12.15am 24 Hours in A&E

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Neighbours
2.30 Neighbours
3.00 Whitstable Pearl Crime drama (S1, ep1)
4.05 Lovejoy Charlotte is attacked by a robber (S6, ep1)
5.20 As Time Goes By Lionel finishes his book (S2, ep1)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S3, ep1)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S3, ep2)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Foggy decides to organise a trip to the seaside (S3, ep3)
8.00 Father Brown An ex-health spa employee is found murdered (S9, ep9)
9.00 Father Brown Lady Felicia's lavish New Year ball is ruined when a VIP guest is murdered (S9, ep10)
10.00 New Tricks (S6, ep8)
11.20-12.40am Luther The DCI suspects he has been double-crossed (S1, ep5)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Green Planet
8.00 Canal Boat Diaries Robbie Cumming explores the scenic River Weaver
9.00 Canal Boat Diaries Robbie sets off from Runcorn on the Bridgewater Canal
10.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

7.00pm The Penguin (5/8)
8.00 The Penguin (6/8)
9.00 Station Eleven Elizabeth, Tyler and Clark confront an even more uncertain future (5/10)
10.00 Station Eleven (6/10)
11.00 The Last of Us (S1, ep9)
12.00-1.30am True Detective: Night Country (S4, ep6)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.55 pm Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (PG, 1942) Mystery thriller starring Basil Rathbone
3.15 Buchanan Rides Alone (U, 1958) Western starring Randolph Scott
4.50 The True Story of Jesse James (PG, 1957) Biopic starring Robert Wagner
6.40 Ad Astra (12, 2019) An astronaut goes on a mission to Neptune to uncover the truth about his missing father. Sci-fi drama starring Brad Pitt
9.00 The Martian (12, 2015) An astronaut left stranded on Mars has to find a way to survive. Sci-fi drama starring Matt Damon
11.50-2.05am Last Night in Soho (18, 2021) Mystery horror starring Thomasin McKenzie

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.05 pm The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre A barrister is brought down by his scheming wife
2.15 The Adventures of Robin Hood
2.45 FILM My Brother's Keeper (PG, 1948) Melodrama starring Jack Warner and George Cole
4.30 The Cheaters
5.00 A Family at War David returns to his old ways
6.00 Rumpole of the Bailey A young man is framed by an infamous gang
7.00 Z Cars Drama
8.00 Public Eye Frank investigates a bankrupt company
9.10 Supernatural A girl becomes obsessed by a doll she thinks is a reincarnation of her dead mother
10.15 Tales of Tomorrow
10.45-12.00m't Cellar Club with Caroline Munro

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.05pm Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall
7.05 The Real Truth
8.15 The Rosenbergs: Atomic Spies Targets of anti-Communist hysteria
9.30 Hunting the KGB Killers
10.40 The Real Truth
12.00-1.15am The Rosenbergs: Atomic Spies

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm The Alien Autopsy Scandal Documentary
8.00 The Salisbury Poisonings: A Spy Next Door
9.40 FILM Bowling for Columbine (15, 2002) Oscar-winning documentary
12.00-2.00am Premier League 360: Big Sam's Bolton Documentary

Radio

Your seven-day listening guide and critics' choice

Saturday 1 August

TIMES RADIO

6.00am Rosie Wright and Nick Wallis **10.00** Harry Wallop. With Timandra Harkness and Aubory Bugg **1.00pm** Jane Mulkerrins. With Evan Barker and Cecelia Ahern **4.00** Ayesha Hazarika with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Highlights from Times Radio **10.00** Darryl Morris **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.00am Sounds of the 60s **8.00** Dermot O'Leary **10.00** Romesh Ranganathan **1.00pm** Ellie Taylor **3.00** Rylan **6.00** Sounds of the 80s **8.00** Sounds of the 90s **10.00** Dance Sounds of the 90s (r) **11.00** Alternative Sounds of the 90s (r)

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.00 Saturday Morning
12.00 Earlier... with Jools Holland. With Fraser T Smith
1.00pm Key Changes: Radio 3's Essential History of Classical Music. *The Marriage of Figaro*
2.00 Record Review
4.00 Sound of Cinema
5.00 This Classical Life. With the conductor Vasily Petrenko (r)
6.00 Music Planet. BCUC share three tracks that have shaped their musical world
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. Aurora Orchestra in Mahler's Symphony No 1 from memory
9.45 Talking Music. Kate Molleson talks to Thea Musgrave
10.30 New Music Show
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Talking Music
Radio 3, 9.45pm

Kate Molleson presents a new series of conversations with artists appearing at the BBC Proms. She begins with the composer Thea Musgrave, *above*, before the world premiere of her BBC-commissioned bassoon concerto *Out of the Darkness* on August 23. They explore her approach to composition, her relationship with performers and her commitment to creating new music.

RADIO 4

5.30am News Summary
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Living on the Edge (r)
6.00 News and Papers
6.07 This Natural Life (r)
6.30 Farming Today This Week
7.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 What Happened to Counter-Culture? Documentary (r)
9.30 What's Up Docs? Why people often follow bad advice (r)
10.00 You're Dead to Me. The history of underwear in the West
10.30 The Kitchen Cabinet
11.00 Radical (r)
11.30 From Our Own Correspondent. Stories
12.04pm Toast. New series. Sean Farrington examines the failure of retail chain Wilko
12.30 Current-ish (r)
1.00 News
1.10 Any Questions? (r)
2.05 Any Answers? Phone-in
2.45 The Archers. Harrison doesn't know where to turn (r)
3.00 Drama: Waiting in the Wings. By Noel Coward (r)
4.30 Weekend Woman's Hour
5.00 Saturday PM
5.30 Sliced Bread (r)
5.54 Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.15 Loose Ends. With Fiona Allen, Olly Smith and Natalie Wildgoose
7.00 Last Word: Doing Death Differently. Matthew Bannister asks who a funeral is for (r)
7.15 Changing the Odds. A look at the consequences of the 2005 Gambling Act (r)
8.00 Archive on 4: Sucking Up — A Guide to Sycophancy Through the Ages. Matthew Gwyther contemplates a society sympathetic to sycophancy
9.00 Dead Rabbit (r)
10.00 News
10.15 The Food Programme (r)
11.00 Olga Koch: OK Computer (r)
11.30 Brain of Britain (r)
12.00 Midnight News
12.15am Take Four Books (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Sunday 2 August

TIMES RADIO

6.00am Rosie Wright and Nick Wallis **10.00** Sunday Morning with Adam Boulton **1.00pm** Ryan Tubridy. With Andy Serkis **4.00** Ayesha Hazarika with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Highlights from Times Radio **10.00** Darryl Morris **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.00am Good Morning Sunday **9.00** Love Songs with Michael Ball **11.00** Paddy McGuinness **1.00pm** Elaine Paige **3.00** Sounds of the Seventies **5.00** Pick of the Pops **7.00** Tony Blackburn **8.00** Paul Gambaccini **10.00** Radio 2 Unwinds

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.00 Sunday Morning
12.00 Private Passions. With guest Suzanne Vega (r)
1.30pm Music Map. Bizet's *Carmen Suite* No 1 (r)
3.00 Sofi Jeannin: Singing Together. Last in the series (r)
4.00 Jazz Record Requests. Binker Golding and Beegie Adair
5.00 The Early Music Show. A concert by Contre le Temps at York Early Music Festival
6.00 Choral Evensong (r)
7.00 New Generation Artists. The Kleio Quartet performs Haydn's Frog Quartet
7.30 Live BBC Proms 2026. The BBC SO and Leonidas Kavakos in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 Unclassified (r)
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Illuminated: Precious Stones
Radio 4, 7.15pm

The former BBC foreign correspondent Jenny Hill, *above*, looks at the effect the things we leave behind when we die have on our families and the way they grieve for us. Her father, Arthur, a chemistry teacher, died three years ago, and in *Precious Stones* she tells of how his collection of rocks, fossils, gemstones and minerals were collected over a lifetime.

RADIO 4

5.30am News Summary
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Bells on Sunday
5.45 In Touch (r)
6.00 News Headlines
6.05 Heart and Soul (r)
6.35 On Your Farm
7.00 News and Papers
7.10 Sunday
7.54 Radio 4 Appeal
8.00 News and Papers
8.10 Sunday Worship
8.48 Witness History (r)
8.58 Tweet of the Day
9.00 Broadcasting House
10.00 Desert Island Discs. With businesswoman Emma Grede
11.00 The Archers. Omnibus (r)
12.15pm Last Word: Doing Death Differently. Funerals (r)
12.30 Just a Minute (r)
1.00 The World This Weekend
1.30 Britain's Robot Army
2.00 Gardeners' Question Time. Listeners' queries (r)
2.45 NatureBang (r)
3.00 Drama: Trouble in Mind. Alice Childress' 1955 play (2/2)
4.00 Bookclub. Discussion
4.30 Brain of Britain. Quiz show
5.00 Witness History (r)
5.10 Church Going (3/3) (r)
5.54 Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.15 Pick of the Week. Highlights
7.00 The Archers. Jazzer makes a controversial suggestion
7.15 Precious Stones. A family must decide what to do with their late father's rock collection
7.45 Just One Thing (r)
8.00 Feedback (r)
8.30 Last Word (r)
9.00 Toast (r)
9.26 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
9.30 From Our Own Correspondent (r)
10.00 Dictators (r)
11.00 Great Lives (r)
11.30 More Wow (r)
11.45 Short Works (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.15am Inside Health (r)
12.45 Bells on Sunday (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Tuesday 4 August

TIMES RADIO

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell. With William Hague and Kezia Dugdale **10.00** Ed Vaizey. With Dino Martins **1.00pm** The Times at One: with Sebastian Payne **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Jazz Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. Highlights from the 2026 Proms, including music by Prokofiev, chamber performances from the 2026 Ryedale Festival and Baroque music from Fribourg
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart. Mozart's relationship with his sister Nannerl
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. The BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conductor Elena Schwarz and Alina Ibragimova perform Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night (r)

A Romanian Ransom
Radio 4, 8pm

Paul Kenyon, *above*, unveils the extraordinary story of antisemitism in Romania, which continued well into the post-Second World War period, when under the communist Ceausescu regime Jews were restricted from leaving Romania. Kenyon follows the stories of Andrea Bernard and Radu Horaud, brought up in the country, hiding their Jewish heritage, whose parents defected to the West.

RADIO 4

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Britain's Robot Army (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Invisible Hands. The story of the man who started the Cold War with a telegram
9.30 Inside Health
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Screenshot (r)
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. Insights (r)
12.04pm Call You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities. A forager who grows wild plants that provide food and medicine
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Sunbird. By Christopher William Hill
3.00 Lady on Trial with Lucy Worsley. An opera singer who challenged Victorian lunacy laws
3.30 Heart and Soul (r)
4.00 The Writing Life of Sylvia Plath. How Plath's experience of mental illness and depression informed her work (3/3)
4.30 What's Up Docs? Hydration
5.00 PM. News headlines
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Meet David Sedaris (r)
7.00 The Archers. The Grundys have a brainwave
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 A Romanian Ransom. A secret Cold War trade of animals in exchange for Jewish lives
8.40 In Touch
9.00 Crossing Continents. New series. How Gaza is developing as an unlikely tech hub
9.30 Scam Secrets (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield (2/10)
11.00 Wild Inside (r)
11.30 Hollywood and the Adland Five. *Blade Runner* (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Wednesday 5 August

TIMES RADIO

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell. With Edwina Currie **10.00** Ed Vaizey. With Rosie Holt, Neil Patrick Harris and George Jacques **1.00pm** The Times at One: with Sebastian Payne **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Folk Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3

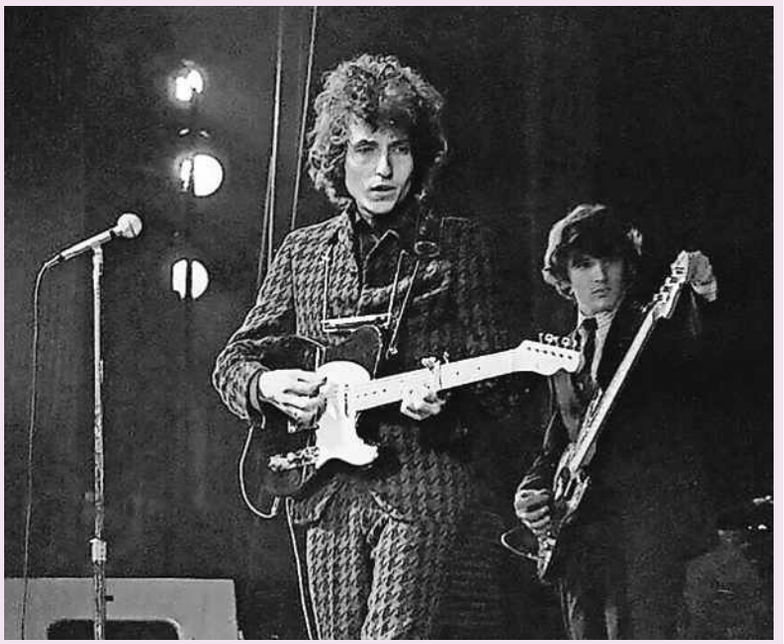
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. Violin Concerto in D by Tchaikovsky
3.00 Choral Evensong
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart. The composer's relationship with Joseph Haydn
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
6.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. Kahchun Wong conducts the Hallé in Ravel and Rachmaninov
8.10 BBC Proms 2026. The Unthanks and friends with the Royal Northern Sinfonia
10.15 Live BBC Proms 2026. Ladysmith Black Mambazo and guests celebrate 40 years of Paul Simon's *Graceland*
11.45 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night (r)

BBC Proms
Radio 3, 8.10pm

A double bill begins with a concert recorded in Middlesbrough, part of the *Proms Across the UK* series. Featured are the Unthanks, *above*, English Teacher, Conor J O'Brien and Jodie Nicholson, accompanied by the Royal Northern Sinfonia. At 10.15pm is the live Prom *Under African Skies: The Songs of Graceland*, which marks the 40th anniversary of Paul Simon's influential album.

RADIO 4

5.00am News Summary
5.04 BBC Inside Science (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Sideways. Exploring why positivity is often the default response to difficult news (4/8)
9.30 Breakin' the Cycle. Colin and D begin production
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 A Romanian Ransom (r)
11.40 This Week in History
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. Inheritance (r)
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities. The construction of houses on stilts in Perthshire, based on an ancient design
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: United Kingdoms. Five short plays on the theme of Hoping (3/5) (r)
3.00 Precious Stones (r)
3.30 The Ocean within Us. Emily Knight explores why the human body contains so much water
4.00 The Power of Guilt (r)
4.15 The Media Show
5.00 PM. With Adam Fleming
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Best Medicine
7.00 The Archers. There's heartbreak in store for Chelsea
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 AntiSocial (r)
8.45 Café Hope (r)
9.00 Invisible Hands (r)
9.30 Inside Health (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield (3/10)
11.00 Sunil Patel: An Idiot's Guide to Living Forever
11.15 Follow the Rabbit (2/5) (r)
11.30 Hollywood and the Adland Five. Adrian Lyne's movies *Flashdance* and *Fatal Attraction*
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service



Bob Dylan with an electric guitar in a concert at the Olympia, Paris, in 1966

Pick of the Week

The Guitar Story
Thursday, Radio 4, 9.30am

The guitar as a force of change

In May 1966 a voice in the crowd at Free Trade Hall in Manchester shouted "Judas!" at Bob Dylan for daring to play an electric guitar, breaking away from the folkie purity of the acoustic. Marking the 60th anniversary, John Wilson presents a four-part series in the *Artworks* strand looking at the story of the instrument as a driver of social and cultural change. Wilson begins with a look at the guitar's history from a classical instrument in Spain used in flamenco to its adoption by American blues musicians. **Clair Woodward**

TIMES RADIO
Our free radio station has all the latest headlines, interviews and debates every morning
Listen seven days a week
DAB ● APP ● WEBSITE ● SMART SPEAKER

Monday 3 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** The Times at One: with Sebastian Payne **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Blues Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics. Georgia Mann presents a selection of music and features
1.00pm Classical Live. The BBC SO in Sibelius's Symphony No 2 and Britten's Cello Symphony from the Proms
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart. Kate Molleson tells Mozart's story through five relationships that shaped him
5.00 In Tune. Music and guests
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra perform Shostakovich's Symphony No 11 and Rachmaninov's *Paganini Variations*
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Vernon Kay
Radio 2, 9.30am

The re-emergence of Phil Collins, *above*, into public life as his health improves continues. He joins Kay for a special edition of *Tracks of My Years*, choosing ten songs that have provided a soundtrack to his life, which include tunes by the Who, Stevie Wonder, the Travelling Wilburys and Taylor Swift. Collins discusses his childhood as a teenage drummer before joining Genesis in 1970.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Last Word (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Across the Red Line. Discussing falling birth rates
9.30 How Did We Get Here?: No World Order. How China reshaped its relationship with the international system
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Behind the Crime. New series. A man who spent years in an Ecuadorian prison
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. Inheritance (r)
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities. New series. People gathering life skills to survive in troubled times
2.00 The Archers. Jazzer makes a controversial suggestion (r)
2.15 Alone. By Moray Hunter (r)
2.45 NatureBang. Discussing giving rights to rivers and forests
3.00 A Good Read. With Dr Vee Kativhu and Susie Riddell
3.30 You're Dead to Me (r)
4.00 Britain's Robot Army (r)
4.30 The Kitchen Cabinet (r)
5.00 PM. With Ben Wright
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Just a Minute
7.00 The Archers. Neil finds himself run ragged
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 The Briefing Room (r)
8.30 BBC Inside Science (r)
9.00 Across the Red Line (r)
9.30 How Did We Get Here?: No World Order (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield. Written by Oliver Goldsmith (1/10)
11.00 Intimacy (2/4)
11.30 Hollywood and the Adland Five. British directors (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Thursday 6 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell **10.00** Ed Vaizey. With Colin Thubron **1.00pm** The Times at One: with Sebastian Payne **2.00** Aasmah Mir **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Country Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics. Ian Skelly plays classical music
1.00pm Classical Live. Mark Forrest introduces highlights from the Proms, including music by Rachmaninov
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart. Antonio Salieri's true relationship with Mozart
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. From the Royal Albert Hall, London, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique & Monteverdi Choir conducted by Mark Elder in a semi-staged performance of Weber's *Oberon*
10.00 Night Tracks. An adventurous soundtrack for late-night listening
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

The Documentary
World Service, 9.30am

We are forever hearing about tech wizards such as Mark Zuckerberg, but this programme celebrates those who took a more guerrilla approach to bringing the internet to the masses. Andrada Fiscutean, *above*, tells the story of Romanian teenagers in the late-1990s who set up a DIY network in Bucharest by stringing cables between tower blocks, which impressed telecoms companies.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Sideways (4/8) (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics. Nero
9.30 The Guitar Story. New series. John Wilson explores how the instrument has driven social and cultural change
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Three Ages of Child (r)
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. With Russell Kane and Selina Flaviu (r)
12.04pm Scam Secrets
12.32 Sliced Bread
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities. Learning how survival skills can build ecological resilience
2.00 The Archers. (r)
2.15 Drama: A Portmeirion Love Affair with Life. Written by Bethan Roberts
3.00 This Natural Life. Tracey Emin introduces Martha Kearney to the wild waves of Margate
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 Feedback. Listeners' views
4.00 The Briefing Room
4.30 BBC Inside Science
5.00 PM. With Ben Wright
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Icklewick FM. Chris and Amy await the Great Zambino (2/6) (r)
7.00 The Archers. One resident faces an emergency dash
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 At Your Own Peril (r)
8.15 The Media Show (r)
9.00 Loose Ends (r)
9.45 The Cows Are Mad (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield (4/10)
11.00 Radical
11.30 Hollywood and the Adland Five. The work of Tony Scott (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Friday 7 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Ayesha Hazarika **4.00** Carolyn Quinn with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Dom Joly **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Michelle Visage **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor **11.00** Rock Show

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics. Ian Skelly plays classical music
1.00pm Classical Live. Including music by Dvorák, chamber performances from this year's Ryedale Festival and Baroque music from Fribourg
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart. Kate Molleson looks at the brotherhood of Freemasons
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. From the Royal Albert Hall, London, the BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, conductor Nil Venditti, and star soloists perform Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and Respighi's *Church Windows* light the first half of the programme
10.00 Late Junction, Dan Gilmore revisits forgotten hard-drive recordings
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Nick Grimshaw
6 Music, 7am

As part of the BBC's *The Music is Black* season, in collaboration with V&A East's exhibition celebrating British black music, every Friday in August the station will celebrate the scene. Today's shows look at the 1980s, starting with Grimshaw talking to the lovers rock pioneers Janet Kay, *above*, and Caroll Thompson, followed by Lauren Laverne (10am) with DJ Norman Jay.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 The Briefing Room (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Desert Island Discs (r)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Food Programme
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. Inheritance (r)
12.04pm AntiSocial
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities. Dan Richards seeks out those who live in close connection with the natural world
2.00 The Archers. One resident faces an emergency dash (r)
2.15 Drama: Central Intelligence. By Greg Haddrick (5/10)
2.45 Living on the Edge (r)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
3.45 Short Works. *Parys, Anglesey* by Fflur Dafydd
4.00 Last Word
4.30 Sideways (4/8) (r)
5.00 PM. With Ben Wright
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Current-ish. Lucy Porter and guests discuss the stories everyone is talking about (3/3)
7.00 The Archers. Keira makes a surprising discovery
7.15 Screenshot. Exploring changing ideas about masculinity on screen (6/6)
8.00 Any Questions? Topical discussion, with Alex Forsyth
8.55 This Week in History (r)
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (r)
9.30 Breakin' the Cycle (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield. By Oliver Goldsmith (5/10)
11.00 Americast. Analysis of cultural and social stories breaking in the US
11.30 The Ocean within Us (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

MindGames

Samurai Sudoku No 1039 Medium

3				5	4	2	6			9			2	1		5		
4	7				3	5				6				3	7			
2		1									8	1						9
	2	3		1						1	4	6			5		3	
5		9	6		7	4		1			2						4	
				8		7	3				7		3			2	1	6
						1						3				7	8	
		5	8								9	6		7	6			2
	1	7	2	9											8	1		3
						7			9			2	3	5				
						5		4					6		9			
							3	9	5			6			4			
7			1	2					7						6	7	8	9
2				4	8					2						2	7	
	6	5				4				8			7					
6	7	2			3		8				1	9		2				
	5						4		5		2		7		4	3		1
	3		8			7	6	2						1		2	5	
5						6	7									5		8
			5	1				4			1	8					2	4
		6		8	4			9		9	4	2	5				7	

Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

Our five-grid Sudoku will test your powers of logic and elimination — against the clock. Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length but the interlocking boxes give you more clues — and more complexity! Remember — don't try to solve each Sudoku grid in turn, the puzzle has to be tackled as a whole.

Solution to last week's Samurai Sudoku No 1038

1	6	9	5	8	2	7	3	4						
2	3	4	9	1	7	8	5	6						
7	5	8	4	6	3	1	2	9						
9	4	5	7	3	8	6	1	2						
3	8	1	6	2	4	9	7	5						
6	7	2	1	5	9	3	4	8						
4	9	3	2	7	6	5	8	1	7	4	3			
8	1	6	3	4	5	2	9	7	5	6	8			
5	2	7	8	9	1	4	6	3	2	9	1			
						9	1	2	3	5	6	4	8	7
						8	4	5	9	7	2	1	6	3
						3	7	6	8	1	4	2	9	5
6	1	5	9	3	4	7	2	8	4	3	9	6	5	1
9	3	2	7	8	6	1	5	4	6	2	7	8	3	9
8	7	4	5	1	2	6	3	9	1	8	5	7	4	2
2	8	1	4	6	9	5	7	3				3	9	7
5	9	6	3	7	1	4	8	2				4	1	8
7	4	3	2	5	8	9	1	6				2	6	5
4	5	7	8	9	3	2	6	1				5	8	4
1	2	8	6	4	7	3	9	5				9	7	3
3	6	9	1	2	5	8	4	7				1	2	6

Stuck on Samurai, KenKen, Killer or Sudoku? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Word Watch

By David Parfitt

Chelp
a. A brown seaweed
b. To speak out of turn
c. A young animal

Frampold
a. A sea wall
b. A picture hook
c. Peevish

Sheogue
a. A stout boot
b. A military leader
c. A fairy

Eurus
a. A prehistoric bear
b. The southeast wind
c. A vocal harmony

Solution on page 46

Polygon

By Roger Phillips

Using the given letters no more than once, make as many words as possible of four or more letters, always including the central letter. Capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives are disallowed.

How you rate: 17 words average; 23, good; 28, very good; 33, excellent.

Friday's solution on page 46. Today's solution in MindGames on Monday

Codeword No 5908

9	16	1	10	20	6	2	24	■	4	12 L	1	9	
25	■	24	■	1	■	5	■	5	■	13	■	25	
1	24	12	13	10	■	8	23	24	20	5	23	1	
23	■	1	■	19	■	8	■	10	■	14	■	5	
10	1	18	7	■	26	5	3	26	5	5	21	5	
■	■	7	■	14	■	20	■	5	■	■	■	21	
6	17	19	14	5	24	■	18	23 A	15	6	12	5	
11	■	■	■	9	■	3	■	10	■	26	■	■	
5	12	5	18	10	26	13	18	■	8	13	3	3	
26	■	26	■	23	■	23	■	9	■	14	■	1	
4	19	26	13	10	5	9	■	5	17	23	12	10	
23	■	6	■	5	■	18	■	22	■	22	■	6	
19	23	26	20	■	11	6	12	13	10	13	6	24	

✗ A B C D E F G H I J K ✓ M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

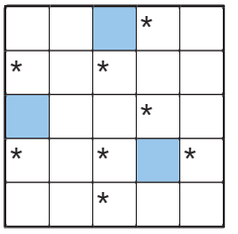
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 L	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23 A	24	25	26	

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid. Proper nouns are excluded.

Stuck on Codeword? To receive four clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Square Routes® No 387 Hard

By Ian Simpson & Richard Heald

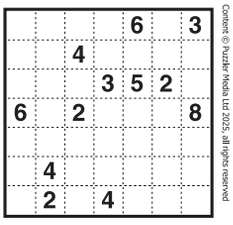


PENELOPE
PITSTOP
PETER
PARKER
PINK
PANTHER
PORKY
PIG

Put one letter in each cell so that each word on the right can be spelt out by moving from cell to cell without using diagonal moves. You can use a cell more than once in a word (including backtracking into a cell you've just used), but double letters (eg, the LL in ALL) must use two adjacent cells. The words start in the coloured cells and the vowels are shown by asterisks.

Cell Blocks

No 5791



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Solution to Square Routes, Codeword and Cell Blocks in MindGames on Monday. Yesterday's solutions on page 45

Sudoku No 16,994 Fiendish

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

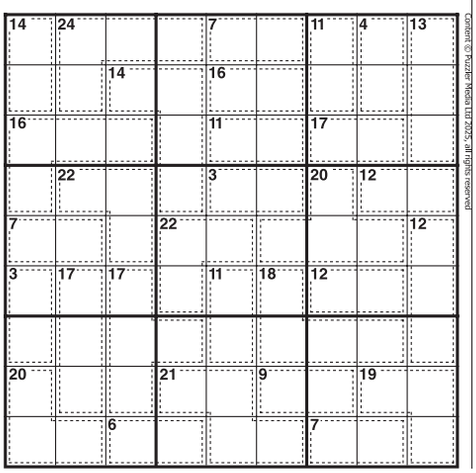
Solutions to Sudoku, Killer & KenKen in MindGames on Monday

				6			8	
3			9			5		
		6		8		1		
	8						1	9
	6		3		7		8	
1	4						5	
		4		2		7		
		9			4			5
7			5					

Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

Killer No 10,855 Deadly

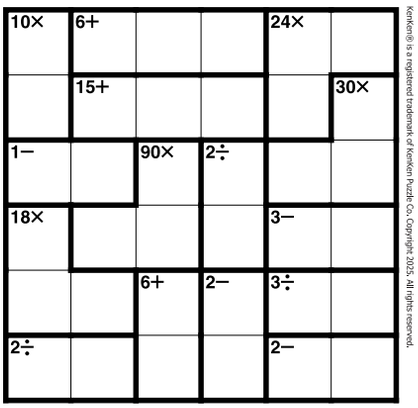
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

KenKen No 6900 Medium

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.



KenKen® is a registered trademark of Kenken Puzzle Co. Copyright 2025. All rights reserved.

Cryptic Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Flutter around a pound (4)

— — — —

2 Turned up with large animal (5)

— — — — —

3 Just after daft naked liaison (6)

— — — — — —

4 Huge deficit in fuel (8)

— — — — — — — —

5 Hoodwink reliable copper (9)

— — — — — — — — —

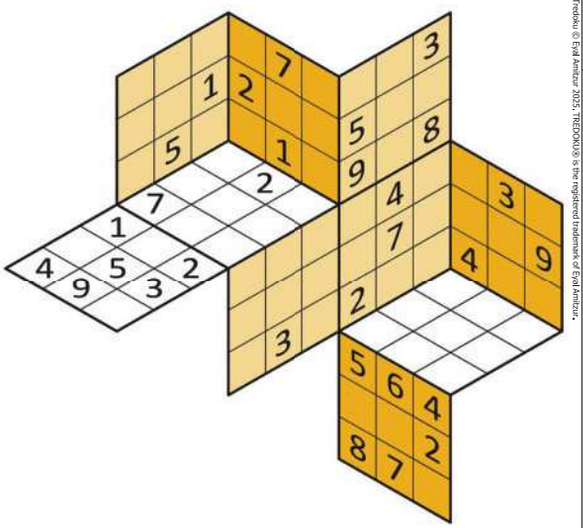
A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B
C	C	C	E	E	E	F	F
I	L	L	L	L	M	N	O
O	O	R	S	S	S	T	T

Solution on page 46

Tredoku No 1953 Medium

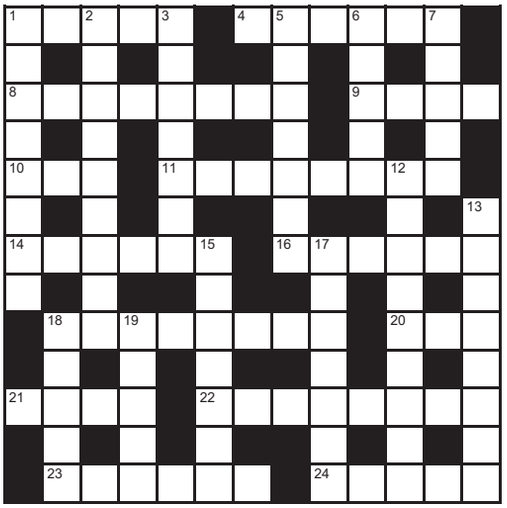
Tredoku is similar to Sudoku: the digits 1 to 9 must appear once only in each 3x3 box and in each line of nine consecutive cells. However, since the puzzle is three-dimensional, the lines may be straight or bent around angles. Follow each line's direction in search of clues.

Solution in MindGames on Monday



Tredoku © Eyal Amitzur 2025. TREDOKU® is the registered trademark of Eyal Amitzur.

times2 Crossword No 10,224



Across

1 20th-century poet who wrote *The Waste Land* (5)
4 Fit for eating (6)
8 Occurring in a repeating pattern (8)
9 Engrossed (4)
10 Chum (3)
11 Hi-tech devices (8)
14 (Of the night sky) lit up by constellations (6)
16 Scoopful of soft food (6)
18 Acclimatise oneself (6,2)
20 --- Khan, Muslim spiritual leader (3)
21 Decision-making panel (4)
22 Person hired to exert influence on legislators (8)
23 Leave the nest (6)
24 Saccharide (5)

Down

1 Enjoyment in pursuits removed from real life (8)
2 Instil (an idea) by forceful repetition (9)
3 Activate, set in motion (7)
5 Flooded (7)
6 Rupture (5)
7 Unoccupied (5)
12 Letting go of (9)
13 Cause liquid to spray messily onto (8)
15 Christmas chocolate cake (4,3)
17 Old-fashioned term for a passenger vehicle (7)
18 Unspecified things (5)
19 Aromatic herb (5)

Solution to Crossword 10,223

			V	E	S	T	R	Y		C	H	A	P	
P		A		T		U				E		E		
A	P	P	L	A	U	S	E		C	L	A	N		
R		I		G		T		A		P		N		
R	E	D		B	R	I	M	S	T	O	N	E		
O				E		C		T		U				
T	A	I	L	E	D		B	U	T	T	E	R		
		M		T		A		T				O		
B	U	M	B	L	E	B	E	E		F	L	Y		
E		O		E		R		N		R		A		
L	O	R	E		B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L		
C		A				D		S		U		S		
H	O	L	E		C	E	A	S	E	D				

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Mindset By 700

1. What do the leading terms of the following make?
BARBUDA, LACEY, REMUS, EURYDICE, MONTENEGRO, CAICOS, TINA, POLLUX

2. Nootropian Bar tax is less than Inn tax, which is less than Pub tax, which is less than Hotel tax. Each is an exact number of mentes per visit, two odd, two even, and all less than 10 — with Pub tax being twice Bar tax. The Inspector found an unmarked payment of 10 mentes for establishments visited, but was able to determine exactly what nature of establishments, and how many, it covered. **What did it cover?**

3. Which birds have been removed from the following words?
*CH, E*AL, GR*, MI*AVE, PE*ION, S*TH

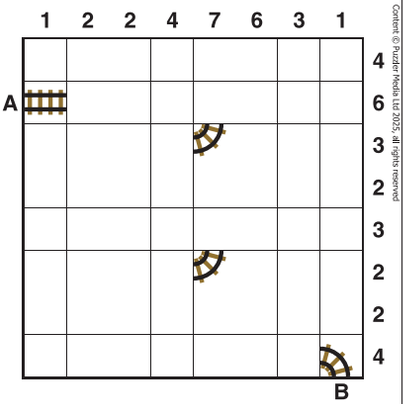
Solutions to Mindset and Scrabble on page 46

Put your solving skills to the test some more with The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1

Train Tracks No 2933

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Solution in MindGames on Monday



Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

When and where was today's archive picture taken? Play Picle at thetimes.com/picle

Scrabble® By Paul Gallen

This week's column features a remarkable endgame from the 2026 Scrabble Players Championship. Orry Swift and Mack Meller produced a finish that underlined one of Scrabble's most important lessons: the game is not over until the last move has been played. On the final scorecard, Meller defeated Swift 518-513, but the route to that five-point margin was anything but straightforward.

After Swift played HEREOUT* for 89 points, he led 513–410 and appeared to have one hand on the championship. In the vast majority of games, a lead of more than 100 points at this stage would be decisive. However, Meller still had one final chance. Imagine you are in his shoes and held the following rack.

A B E I I R T

Using the main board diagram underneath the column, can you spot the bonus-word outplay?

Meller found the bonus word for 86 points, moving his score from 410 to 496. Swift was left holding CORUUY, worth 11 points. The end-of-game adjustment thus added 22 points to Meller's score, giving him a remarkable 518–513 victory.

The finish provides an important lesson for tournament players. When the bag is empty, success depends not only on word knowledge but also on tile-tracking and accurate arithmetic.

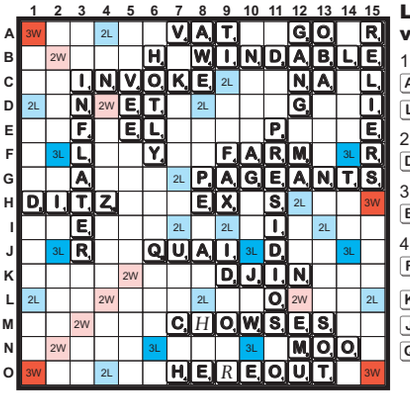
Meller had less than three minutes on his clock when he spotted the bonus word, but he kept his cool to quickly work out that his play would win the match. His other option was to challenge Swift's last move of HEREOUT*, which is an invalid word, but Meller chose the option that he knew would deliver victory for certain.

Your final challenge is to find the bonus word that Meller refused earlier in the game, using the board extract and rack below. The eventual champion instead elected to keep his blank tile and neutralise the dangerous triple-word score square with VAT (A7a).

A C G N T V _

Collins Official Scrabble Words is the word authority used.
Word positions use the grid reference plus (a)cross or (d)own.

2L double letter square (dl) 3L triple letter square (tl) 2W double word square (dw) 3W triple word square (tw)



Letter values

1 point: A E I O U L N R S T
2 points: D G
3 points: B C M P
4 points: F H V W Y
K = 5
J X = 8
Q Z = 10

SCRABBLE® is a registered trademark of J. W. Spear & Sons Ltd ©Mattel 2026

Solutions

Killer 10,852

6	3	9	4	5	1	8	2	7
8	4	5	2	6	7	3	1	9
1	7	2	9	3	8	6	4	5
3	2	1	8	7	5	4	9	6
9	6	8	1	4	3	7	5	2
7	5	4	6	2	9	1	3	8
5	9	7	3	8	4	2	6	1
4	8	6	5	1	2	9	7	3
2	1	3	7	9	6	5	8	4

Killer 10,853

4	6	5	8	3	1	7	2	9
8	1	2	7	6	9	5	3	4
9	3	7	4	5	2	8	6	1
7	9	8	3	4	5	2	1	6
6	2	4	1	8	7	9	5	3
1	5	3	9	2	6	4	7	8
5	4	1	6	7	8	3	9	2
3	7	6	2	9	4	1	8	5
2	8	9	5	1	3	6	4	7

KenKen 6899

180× 6	2	20× 5	4	1	15+ 3
5	3	12× 2	10+ 6	4	1
1− 3	15+ 4	6	1	11+ 2	5
4	6	1	10+ 5	3	48× 2
25× 1	5	3	2	6	4
2	3− 1	4	2− 3	5	6

The Listener 4928

1 I	2 N	3 T	E	4 R	I	5 O	R	6 A	7 T	O	8 P
9 K	A	R	A	E	N	N	O	M	A	10 D	E
A	L	I	11 S	C	U	T	T	E	R	E	D
12 T	O	O	L	R	R	O	13 A	B	O	C	D
14 C	O	N	V	E	N	T	I	O	N	A	L
15 U	16 S	E	17 R	A	S	T	R	I	18 G	N	I
M	O	S	19 A	T	20 R	A	M	21 T	R	I	N
22 P	R	E	S	E	N	T	A	T	I	23 V	E
I	N	24 C	I	D	25 U	T	R	26 S	T	E	27 W
28 R	E	E	D	I	N	E	S	S	T	I	E
29 A	D	D	E	N	D	U	M	30 H	31 G	E	N	A
32 A	D	D	E	N	D	U	M	H	33 G	E	N	A
34 G	U	E	S	35 S	E	T	A	R	D	E	R

Name: GÖDEL

You Can't Have Both! by Leo

Kurt Gödel's theorems state that systems that are complete (can prove all things) cannot be consistent (containing no contradictions) and ones that are consistent cannot be complete. The 12 clashes were replaced by "inconsistent". Final letters missing from words in other clues spelt "incompleteness" and their answers were entered without the last letter. More details at listenercrossword.com.

The winners are Sarah and Mike Bruce of New Malden, Surrey; Mrs R Gildart of Southport, Merseyside; Nick Gibbs of Scarrington, Nottinghamshire.

Sudoku 16,989

2	6	5	4	1	8	9	3	7
3	1	7	2	5	9	8	4	6
9	8	4	7	6	3	5	2	1
7	9	1	8	2	4	3	6	5
4	5	8	3	7	6	2	1	9
6	2	3	5	9	1	4	7	8
8	7	9	1	4	2	6	5	3
5	3	2	6	8	7	1	9	4
1	4	6	9	3	5	7	8	2

Sudoku 16,990

7	8	5	1	6	3	4	9	2
4	1	2	9	5	8	7	3	6
3	9	6	7	2	4	5	8	1
9	5	4	6	3	1	2	7	8
1	2	8	5	4	7	3	6	9
6	3	7	8	9	2	1	5	4
5	4	9	2	7	6	8	1	3
8	7	3	4	1	9	6	2	5
2	6	1	3	8	5	9	4	7

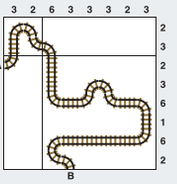
Sudoku 16,991

8	3	6	2	4	9	1	7	5
2	4	9	7	1	5	8	6	3
5	1	7	6	8	3	4	2	9
6	8	3	1	7	2	5	9	4
4	7	1	5	9	8	6	3	2
9	5	2	4	3	6	7	8	1
3	2	4	8	5	7	9	1	6
1	6	8	9	2	4	3	5	7
7	9	5	3	6	1	2	4	8

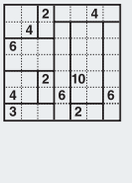
Codeword 5907

D	E	M	E	A	N	■	A	R	M	L	E	T		
■	X	■	Q	■	I	■	C	■	A	■	L	■		
S	P	L	U	T	T	E	R	■	J	E	E	P		
■	E	■	A	■	R	■	I	■	O	■	C	■		
K	N	O	T	■	O	B	D	U	R	A	T	E		
■	D	■	O	■	U	■	■	■	■	■	R	■		
W	A	L	R	U	S	■	H	O	B	N	O	B		
■	B	■	■	■	O	■	R	■	C	■	■	■		
N	I	H	I	L	I	S	T	■	A	R	U	M		
■	L	■	N	■	S	■	F	■	V	■	T	■		
Z	I	N	G	■	S	P	O	R	A	D	I	C		
■	T	■	O	■	U	■	O	■	D	■	O	■		
M	Y	R	T	L	E	■	T	H	O	R	N	Y		

Train Tracks 2932



Cell Blocks 5790



MindGames

Chess By David Howell

Heavy Lies the Crown

The Gukesh who finished last at the Chennai Grand Masters was almost unrecognisable from the teenager who conquered the chess world in 2024. Seven games brought three defeats and no wins. More troubling was his body language: shoulders slumped, seemingly burdened by the expectations that now accompany his every move.

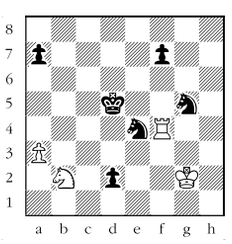
Gukesh has finished bottom at three tournaments this year. His rating has plummeted by 90 points, now barely above 2700 and clinging to a spot in the top 30. There are echoes of the malaise that afflicted his predecessor, Ding Liren.

A loss of confidence has increasingly affected his play. When patience is required, he seems unable to tolerate the tension, searching instead for tactical lunges. Time trouble is a recurring problem. For a player whose greatest strength is deep calculation, Gukesh suffers more than most when his clock ticks down. This is especially ominous before his title defence against Javokhir Sindarov in Geneva this November. Sindarov excels at punishing opponents who run short of time.

Yet world championship matches often obey their own logic. Gukesh can still reset and rediscover himself. His schedule has been too much. The answer may be a proper break to recover. Then he can return to basics — keep positions manageable, avoid complications and let Sindarov do the running. When confidence is low, reacting is easier than creating.

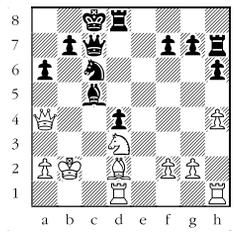
Sportsmen rest when their bodies are injured. A bruised chess mind deserves the same care. Gukesh's talent has not disappeared. Given room to breathe, the player who became world champion in 2024 may yet return.

White: Gukesh D
Black: Arjun Erigaisi
Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters 2026



White has a rook for knight and two pawns. Rather than try to deal with Black's d-pawn, Gukesh falls apart quickly. **54 Rf5+?** This only helps Black to complete his plan. 54 Kf1 should easily hold a draw: 54...Kd4 55 Ke2 Kc3 56 Ndl+ Kc2 57 Ne3+. **54...Kd4 55 Ra5 Kc3 56 Ndl+ Kc2 57 Ne3+ Kd3 58 Ndl Ke2 59 Nb2 Nf3 60 Kh3 Nel 61 Rd5 Nf2+ 62 Kh2 Ned3 63 Na4 Ne4 White resigns** Promotion can no longer be prevented.

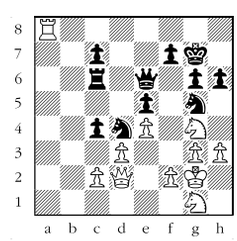
White: Pranesh M
Black: Gukesh D
Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters 2026



Having earlier won two pawns, the hard work should be done. Instead, Gukesh fails to keep things simple. **25...Rd5?** A bizarre move that unnecessarily gives White targets. 25...Bd6 26 Rcl Kb8 27 Kal Rhh8 would coordinate the pieces, leaving Black in control. **26 Qc4 Qd6 27 Bf4 Ba3+ 28 Kal Qd7 29 Rb1 b5?** Simply inexplicable. This pushes the limits too far. Taking action should never work while there is an awkward rook on h7 failing to contribute to the game. 29...Rh8! 30 Rb6 Rb5 31 Rxb5 axb5 32 Qxb5 Bd6 returns one of the pawns, but at least the black king is safe. **30 Qb3 b4 31 Qc4** Gukesh has locked his own bishop out of the game. The h7-rook is still absent and the king is vulnerable. **31...Kd8 32 Nc5 Qf5 33 Nb7+ Kd7 34 g4!** Tipping Black off balance. The loose d5-rook cannot be saved. **34...Qe4 35 Rhe1 Qf3 36 Rb3 Qxf4 37 Qxd5+ Kc7 38 Rf3 Bb2+ 39 Kb1 Black resigns** 39...Qd2 40 Rxf7+ Kb6 41 Qc5 is mate.

Winning Move

White to play. Sindarov-So, Miami 2026. While Gukesh's form has been declining, the opposite is true of his challenger. How did Sindarov successfully end the game within a few moves?



The first correct entry drawn on Thursday wins *The Times Winning Moves:* and *The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1.* Two runners-up will receive a book prize. Answers on a postcard to: The Times Winning Move, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or email: winningmove@thetimes.co.uk. Open to 18+, UK and ROI residents only. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's puzzle: 1...Rxc2+! wins: **2 Kxc2 Ra2+ 3 Kcl Nb3 mate.**

The winner is Colin Howe of Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The runners-up are Steven Bush of Edinburgh, and John Moor of Wokingham, Berkshire.

Bridge By Andrew Robson

Here is undoubtedly the freakiest of the 464 deals played in the Open series of the recent 57th European Bridge National Teams Championships in Riga, Latvia. It occurred in Match 11 (of 29).

Dealer East — Both Vul

	♠ Q 4 ♥ 5 3 ♦ K 10 ♣ K 10 9 8 7 6 3	
♠ 9 3 ♥ K 9 7 6 ♦ Q J 8 7 6 5 ♣ J	N W E S	♠ 2 ♥ A J ♦ A 9 4 3 2 ♣ A Q 5 4 2
	♠ A K J 10 8 7 6 5 ♥ Q 10 8 4 2 ♦ - ♣ -	

Table One

S	W(Norton)	N	E(Tommasini)
			1♦(1)
4♠	5♦	Dbl(2)	Pass
5♥	Pass	5♠	Dbl(3)
end			

(1) High fives (start high, finish low).
(2) Dubious but was to work well.
(3) Hard for Stefano Tommasini of London to bid on to 6♦ after being doubled in 5♦.

West, Ben Norton of Loughborough, kicked off with his singleton jack of clubs, to the king, ace and ruffed. At trick two, the Ukraine declarer led the ten of hearts, a fatal error — that ten was too valuable a card to waste. East won the jack and declarer now needed to ruff two hearts in dummy. With East having a couple of opportunites to switch to his spade, the contract had to go one down.

E-W, however, were not happy with their score — they can make 6♦ by taking the right view to finesse in diamonds (surely indicated on the bidding). All was well ...

Table Two

S(Dyke)	W	N(Byrne)	E
			1♦
1♠(1)	2♥(2)	3♣(3)	5♦
5♠(4)	Pass	Pass	Dbl
end			

(1) Kieran Dyke from London opts to slow-play.
(2) I believe this showed a good diamond raise with four hearts on the side (interesting agreement).
(3) Michael Byrne of Manchester likes to get involved. His 3♣ was natural — no implied spade fit.
(4) Could be wrong if partner just has a load of clubs — but you don't pick up this hand to defend ...

Declarer ruffed the club lead and led a low heart. East won the jack and led a low club. Ruffing high, declarer led another low heart.

East won the ace and switched to his spade but declarer won and could take the ruffing heart finesse (having not squandered his precious ♥Q10) to bring home 5♠ doubled.

At the 30 tables in the Open series, the contract was 5♠ at 11 (doubled in all but one case), making nine times. At nine, it was 6♦ (doubled six times), making every time. At another nine, it was 6♠ (always doubled), seven declarers getting out for one down. At the one remaining table, the Latvia South jumped straight to 6♠ over 1♦ (I like it), whereupon the Finland West took the bait and bid 7♦, doubled and one down.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

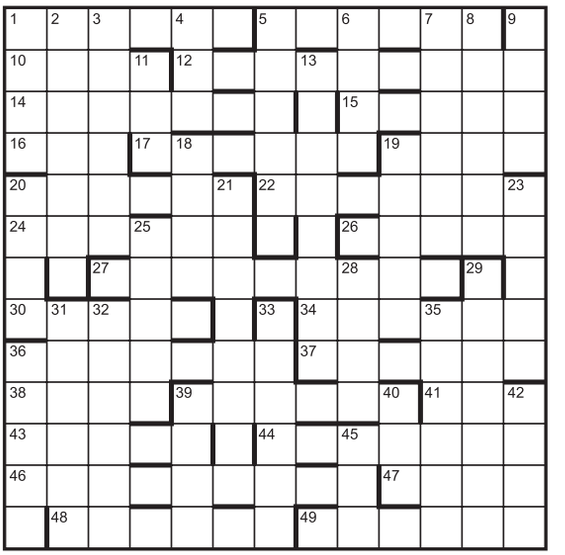
The Listener Crossword No 4931 Rising Star by Sage

Senders of the first three correct entries drawn will receive *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* or may choose from a selection of other books (see below). Send your entry with contact details completed to: Listener Crossword 4931, 5 Ibbetson Rise, Leeds, LS27 7UJ, to arrive by August 13.

Listener 4928 solution on page 45

Prize options and more at listenercrossword.com

More information about Chambers books can be found at chambers.co.uk



Name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... **Email/phone**.....

Most clues have a letter misprinted. Corrections for across clues spell part of a quotation spoken by 36dn. In four other across clues, the wordplay leads to the answer (entered normally) altered in one of two thematic ways. Down clue corrections spell how solvers must show a representation of the scene (28 cells). The other four down clues' initials spell a word that can be traced from the top row and must be blacked out to enact the next part of the quotation. *The Chambers Dictionary* (2016) is the primary reference; one answer is an abbreviation.

Across

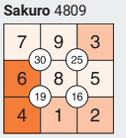
1 Germany alas accepts end of pretzel shop (6)
5 Rowing, say, without sense hurt carotid (6)
10 Get angry from bit of bag over in lake (4)
12 Cycles turn before cool square (9)
14 Can Inland Revenue forward March deposit? (7, *two words*)
15 Judges at first demand justice — temporary blockages (5)
16 Poet's to acquire summer nuts in park (3)
17 High brackets follow line of beams (6)
19 Jacob's fat perhaps from seconds of assorted puddings and big steaks (4)
20 Ian's emptied ordinary medicine on stubbed toe (6)
22 Sappho for one sat around in odd pose (7)
24 Round bit of finger on lumpy wrist bone (6)
26 Former romance gets refreshed with babe (5)
27 Fool restrains crowd after Oscar gripes (9)
30 Chromosome has mixed DNA in it (5)
34 Sun flickers in pass French held once (6)
36 Bird grins endlessly as decoy (7)
37 Mistress takes touring Ethiopian prince (6)
38 Olive's group fired into old flame's heart (4)
39 Modifies criminal tale right by judge (6)
41 Useful transporter in Tasmania, primarily (3)
43 Silent type failed in pantomime role (5)
44 Drink seller succeeded in trades again (7)
46 Old Spanish rover lost me on a road (9)
47 Matches set back over muddle of kit (4)
48 Now York breaks off regardless (6)
49 Make Edenic nuns advance majestically (6)

Down

1 Priest riding among Arab Bedouins (4)
2 Lines of unheaded drivel flopped in ladies' paper? (7, *two words*)
3 Small and dainty mink bending leg (6)
4 African rig bumper's ends may slow this (3)
5 Croak, choking on discarded tartlet (6)
6 Aged wine's yours — lovely, not posh (4)
7 Clothes in marbled cut suede (6)
8 Strangest bygone oats with testa shelled (6)
9 Attention seeker spasms up regularly (4)
11 Mendacious, oddly selected to freeload (3)
13 Rhino tongues churning corn mush (8)
18 Care of ear amid record waxy secretion (4)
19 Idle youths raided this rural vessel (5)
20 Amazonian tart I gobble up (4)
21 Disruptive person riled earl briefly at tea (8)
23 Oban's seasons lie in ship capsized (5)
25 Ground pine area not inspiring in Maine (5)
28 Rise up well with Aladdin's top rug (4)
29 Elbowed way into joint, breaking rule (7)
31 Order nothing to go over active sinkhole (6)
32 Host primate from Morocco in a cage (6)
33 Note under stylish tin letter container (6)
35 Scots hired mourner no longer lies moping about half aunt (6)
39 Lined up missile lacking load of rockets (4)
40 Short test notated in series of figures (3)
42 Being finally free, paints love at last (4)
45 Native starts to suck on noodles (3)

Today's Solutions

Sakuro 4809



Cryptic Quintagram

1 Beat
2 Camel
3 Affair
4 Colossal
5 Constable

Friday's Polygon

abed, **abundance**, acned, aubade, band, bandeau, baud, bead, bend, bund, caned, canned, dace, dance, daub, daube, dean, duenna, dunce, dune, ecad, nada, nude, unbend.

Scrabble

DIATRIBE (H1d); VACATING (K6a) — 63 points.

Word Watch

Chelp (b) To speak out of turn (*Collins*)
Frampold (c) Peevish (*Chambers*)
Sheogue (c) A fairy (*OED*)
Eurus (b) The southeast wind (*Chambers*)

Mindset

1. They make an ACROSTIC. Antigua and Barbuda; Cagney and Lacey; Romulus and Remus; Orpheus and Eurydice; Serbia and Montenegro; Turks and Caicos; Ike and Tina; Castor and Pollux.
2. Two Inns. Only possibilities are (3,5,6,8) or (4,5,8,9).
3. WRENch, eTERNal, grOWL, miCROWave, peTITion, sTEALth

One question — four hints
How many will you need?
Try Quizle here or at thetimes.com/quizle

Jumbo crossword No 1802

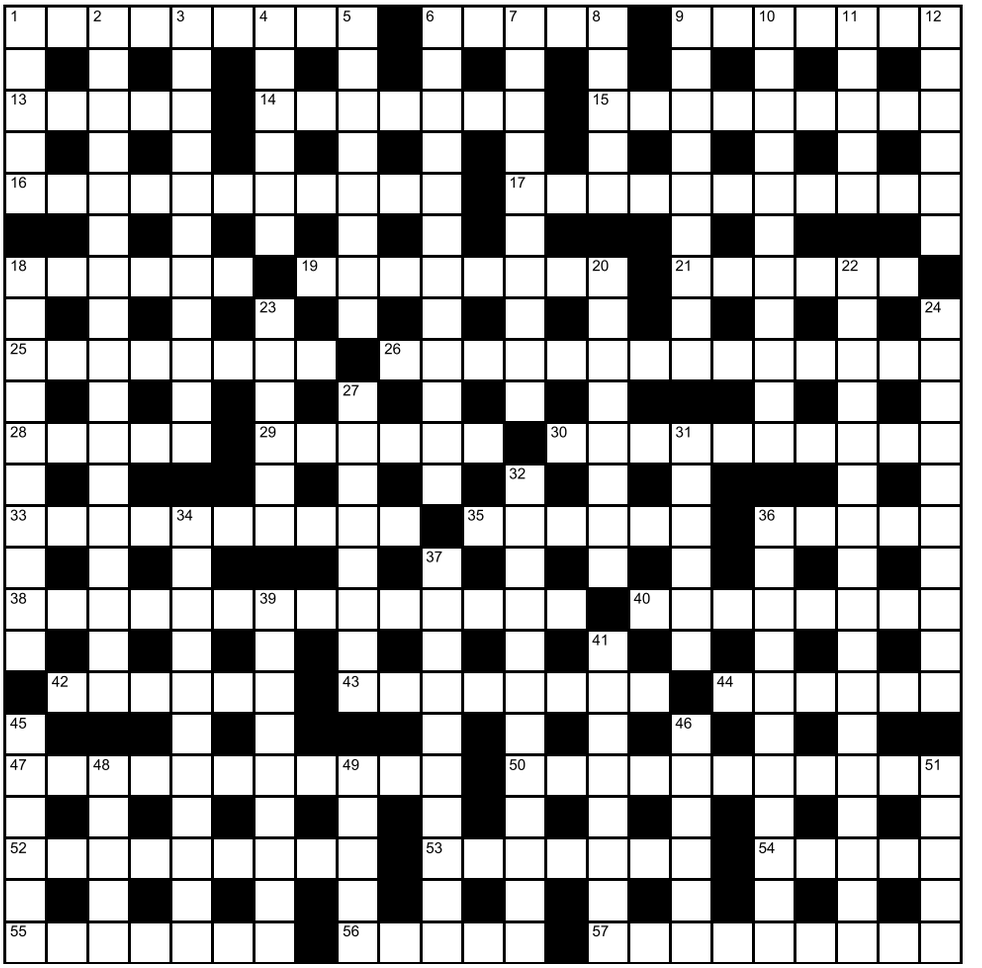
Cryptic clues

Across

1 Confined after fall, son certain to drink given the circumstances (9)
6 Managed one day going round capital of Jordan (5)
9 Investigate South American money, but only a little before time (4,3)
13 Force out unsatisfactory individual, becoming leaderless (5)
14 Singer chats about simple arrangement (7)
15 Scraped together mature port's price (9)
16 Policeman arrests disorderly Baltimore suspect (11)
17 Recently abroad with a touring Italian in Rome (7,4)
18 Primate and bishop, reflecting regularly, doubt own God (6)
19 A worker on ship caught violent attacker (8)
21 Arouse Earl on leave, bored by Charlie (6)
25 Inside joke overheard by journalist and absorbed (8)
26 One flagging in role as public representative? (8-6)
28 Head cut from Melania Trump's plant (5)
29 Professor at Oregon entertains accomplished speaker (6)
30 Variety of tunes spun on radio touches Greek character so (5,5)
33 Separated writers author sitcom (3,7)
35 Identifying band as "rap metal" originally permitted (6)
36 Such a long way to this point (2,3)
38 Shy PA may attend dances for emotional support (3,3,8)
40 Bar open, welcoming heroine at last ... Pussy Galore? (8)
42 Mention husband harbouring crabs initially comes over feverish (6)
43 Massive fuel deficit spreads (8)
44 Fearful look around entering outskirts of Coventry (6)
47 Pre-prepared food was underwhelming for Spooner (6,5)
50 Criminal lair trademark exposed officer (4,7)
52 Desperate couple accepting society's state of collapse (9)
53 Model salesperson, left in charge, leads area (7)
54 Beginning to tailor tiny Scottish duke's cloth for suits (5)
55 In Windsor, I would firstly set about cracking eggs (5,2)
56 Possible location of film actor's birth (5)
57 Cover sheet manufactured with an unfinished hem (9)

Down

1 Excessively demanding way to go up (5)
2 Poem on ailing and death got English disturbed (3,2,1,11)
3 Tour vehicles club employs to take band to the north (11)
4 Jock's awful problem heard by judge periodically (6)
5 Perish eating faceless Italian food's enzyme (8)
6 Filmmaker might do this disruptive occupation, perhaps (6,6)
7 Fresh enthusiasm over contents of sandy Pacific islands (3,7)
8 Regret admitting sporting gaffe's not an honest one (5)
9 Pace around Bologna at intervals with loud baby (5-4)
10 Item from dairy best available after switching locations (6,5)
11 Arab soon to return (5)
12 Coloured garment fastened with last bits of sticky tape (3-3)
18 Track flying bird, returning record penned by left hand (6,4)
20 Notice about bank limits not for writing on (4-4)
22 Dialogue from *The Lovers*, possibly — a Debra Winger film (5,2,10)
23 Behave theatrically after reading, maybe, and faint (6)
24 Introductory item on screen going into quarry (10)
27 Criticise medic spreading infectious disease (8)
31 With first half upset, flair not visible (6)
32 Their captors arranged sunken area to play in (9,3)
34 Achieve great success as one in tower might? (4,3,4)
36 Honest Frenchman shortly to be in French area (6,5)
37 Posters in church facility lining sides of building (10)
39 Reserve covering kid's small period of absence (4,5)
41 Axe vital works? This should make going easier (8)
45 Support for Jimmy White drops again after rising (6)
46 Abraham's wife retired with small dog (6)
48 Easy way to serve peas if starter becomes cold (5)
49 DEA agent's informant really vocal (5)
51 Author to enter cabin (5)



NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

Prizes

The prize for each of the first correct solutions to the Cryptic and times2 Jumbo clues to be opened will be a collection of Times reference books — including The Times Reference Atlas of the World, Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, and Bradford's Crossword Solver's Dictionary published by HarperCollins. Entries should be marked "Cryptic" or "times2" and sent to: The Times Jumbo Crossword 1802, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ; or emailed to: jumbo@thetimes.co.uk, with "Cryptic 1802" or "times2 1802" in the subject line, to arrive by August 13. Open to 18+, UK & ROI residents only. The winners and the solutions will be published on August 15.

times2 clues

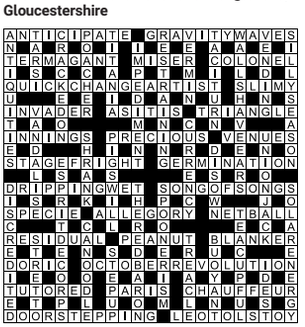
Across

1 Experienced in the mind through the feelings of another (9)
6 Former gold coin (5)
9 Ennui (7)
13 Valued, assessed (5)
14 Set off, cause to function (7)
15 Outrageously evil (9)
16 Conjecture (11)
17 Labour-saving device; public toilet (11)
18 Delicately small and pretty (6)
19 Accumulation of debris (8)
21 Walk wearily (6)
25 Horse with irregular patches of colour (8)
26 Signal for race to begin (8,6)
28 Search through; gun (5)
29 Relaxed, good-humoured (6)
30 Headland (10)
33 Very funny (10)
35 Worker in wood (6)
36 Being further inside (5)
38 State of having elevated moral principles (4-10)
40 Choral composition (4,4)
42 Make up (6)
43 Not frightened (8)
44 French novelist (6)
47 Not wanted; objectionable (11)
50 Food or drink stimulating desire (11)
52 Inability to relax (9)
53 Instalment of a serial (7)
54 Colour (5)
55 Gesture of greeting (7)
56 Name; right to ownership (5)
57 Indigestion (9)

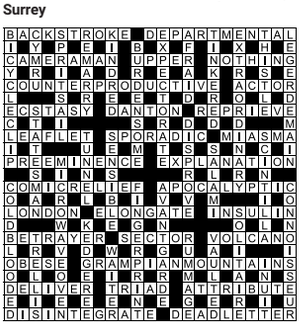
Down

1 Infective particle (5)
2 first wife of Henry VIII (9,2,6)
3 To be feared, formidable (11)
4 Expenditure (6)
5 Animated, lively (8)
6 Process of decline (12)
7 Exaggerated depiction (10)
8 — *of Athens*, Shakespeare play (5)
9 German federal assembly (9)
10 Punishment, vengeance (11)
11 Kill by immersion (5)
12 Edible bivalve mollusc (6)
18 Very worried and upset (10)
20 Waking from sleep (8)
22 Set to work seriously (3,4,2,8)
23 Former pupils of a particular school of college (6)
24 Eg, Alan Ayckbourn (10)
27 Inspector in the Pink Panther films (8)
31 Innumerable; very large number (6)
32 Tending to be moderate or cautious (12)
34 Lack of direction (11)
36 Mix together (11)
37 Betrothal; battle (10)
39 Infamy, disrepute (9)
41 Keep back (8)
45 Characteristic of country life (6)
46 A lot (6)
48 Giver of blood or an organ (5)
49 Surround, attack from all sides (5)
51 Dance in a line (5)

Solution to Cryptic Jumbo 1800
The winner is Clare Boucher of Longlevens, Gloucestershire



Solution to times2 Jumbo 1800
The winner is Lilian Gent of Hampton Wick, Surrey



The Times Crossword, Latin Crossword, Saturday Quiz and Sakuro are in the back of the main paper

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Save up to £300 per couple on selected departures*

11 DAYS FROM
£2,809*
per person

Croatia Uncovered

September 2026 to September 2027

Fascinating history, untouched natural beauty and exceptional cuisine, Croatia has it all and you'll experience everything this amazing destination has to offer by land and sea.

On land, you'll travel north from Split to explore the medieval cobbled streets of Trogir and Zadar, lined with historic buildings that lead to charming squares. Discover delicious local cuisine at a rural estate and walk along the picturesque trails of Krka National Park where forests, waterfalls and pools abound.

Step aboard the MV Adriatic Pearl for the second part of this tour. We've searched high and low to find a beautiful ship that's small enough to visit Croatia's tiny unspoilt islands and drop anchor in secluded bays, yet large enough for everyone to have the comfort and space they need to relax.

The MV Adriatic Pearl carries less than 40 passengers, and we've chartered it exclusively so the only people on board will be your crew and other Travelsphere holidaymakers.

Visit Korcula with its striking city walls, stop at Mljet with its beautiful combination of saltwater lakes, dense forest and Franciscan Monastery, take in a quiet fishing village on Solta, and enjoy the photogenic beaches and medieval architecture of Hvar. In between stops, you can soak up the sun from the deck of your elegant ship and enjoy beautiful swim stops for a cooling dip in the Adriatic Sea.

Price includes

- Return flights from London, plus overseas transportation
- Three nights in four-star hotels
- Seven-night exclusive cruise on board the Deluxe MV Adriatic Pearl
- Ten breakfasts, five lunches, six dinners and welcome drink
- Enjoy a Captain's Dinner and farewell dinner on board
- Tour Krka National Park and Mljet National Park
- Explore the cities of Zadar, Dubrovnik, and Split
- Visit the islands of Korcula, Hvar and Solta
- Home-made olive oil tasting
- Services of a Travelsphere holiday director

"Wonderful ship, Holiday Director and crew. Access to all harbours and villages a bonus! Beautiful locations. Interesting mix of visits, villages and cities. Great food on board and spotlessly clean ship and cabins. A fabulous holiday!"
Ingrid

Trustpilot

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

CALL TODAY ON
0808 304 8639
thetimes.com/ts-croatiauncovered
QUOTE TIMES

Our trusted partner travelsphere | ABTA Travel with confidence

*Discount on selected departures only and already deducted from advertised price. Prices correct at time of print. Prices shown are based on twin occupancy of a double or twin bedded room and economy flights. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Travelsphere. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Travelsphere, ABTA Y6412, ATOL 11266 a company wholly independent of News UK.

THE TIMES
SATURDAY AUGUST 1 2026
Spor

Fifa allies turn on Infantino

- Key executive denounces "project of one person"
- Senior adviser resigns in protest as pressure mounts
- Sell-off plan in tatters after Asia joins opposition

Martyn Ziegler on disastrous day for president, pages 2-3

Mudryk ban lifted

Chelsea winger's doping case resolved

Page 4

Farewell to an icon

Ian Hawkey's tribute to Franco Baresi

Page 6

Root only real choice

Mike Atherton on returning captain

Pages 8-9

The day that left Infantino's future in serious doubt

Martyn Ziegler
Chief Sports Reporter

It was a day that began with Gianni Infantino doubling down on his World Cup sell-off plan, a lame attempt to be defiant in the face of a European boycott. It ended with close aides turning on the Fifa president and leaving his very future in serious doubt.

Europe's seismic decision to boycott Fifa tournaments on Thursday was the beginning of the end. Infantino tried to see that off, insisting in the early hours of yesterday that the vote on selling a stake of Fifa tournaments to private investors would go ahead.

Within hours, however, the scheme — and probably his own future as Fifa president — was dealt a series of body blows that now look fatal.

First, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), representing 47 countries, issued a statement condemning the plan and the process behind it, echoing the response from Concacaf, which has 35 Fifa members in North and Central America and the Caribbean. With 55 Uefa members also opposed to the scheme, the maths for Infantino suddenly showed that he was in deep trouble: 137 out of 211 already against.

Soon after those confederation statements came other developments that, while more personal in nature, will be even more wounding to Infantino's position. First, Carlos Cordeiro, the former investment banker who was by Infantino's side as his senior adviser for much of the 2026 World Cup, resigned in protest with a bombshell of a statement.

Things went from bad to much, much worse for Infantino when Fifa's chief operating officer, Kevin Lamour, launched a blistering attack on the project and his own president.

But if those statements had not gone directly for the jugular as far as Infantino's own position was concerned, Andy Burnham had no such compunction.

The prime minister said: "My view is strengthening — this was an outrageous suggestion. The idea that it could even be brought forward, in my view, shows that the Fifa [president] is the wrong man to lead the organisation."

For those in positions of authority in football administration, however, it will be the statements of Lamour and Cordeiro that will resonate more strongly.

Lamour, a Frenchman who is highly respected around the world, especially in Africa and Asia, wrote a statement that may well end up as a resignation letter. He described Infantino's scheme as "the project of one person".

He described Infantino's secrecy around the project — just about everyone in Fifa apart from a tiny clique was kept in the dark — as "a lie by omission over many months", adding: "This [lie and] unilateral exercise of power are not trivial. They are indicative of a lack of trust, a lack of transparency, a lack of discernment, a lack of good governance. And a serious lack of respect. Not only must this project not go ahead, but the time has now come for football political leaders to ask themselves the right questions and make the right decisions.

"My feeling is that we all want to be proud to work for Fifa, and today, unfortunately, it seems that is no longer the case for many of us. That saddens me. My colleagues — some of whom have dedicated their lives to football — deserve better than contempt and intimidation.

"The ball is now in the court of those who have the power to change things. I know I have a duty of loyalty to my employer. But I also, and above all, have a duty of loyalty to certain values and to the upbringing I have received, and a duty to support my colleagues. And if that means I lose my job, then so be it. I will understand and respect that decision. At least I'll sleep well tonight."

Cordeiro, an American who was a vice-chairman at Goldman Sachs, could speak from decades of experience about what was at stake financially for Fifa. He said: "As a senior adviser to the Fifa president, a former banker, and a lifelong football fan, I cannot stand by while Fifa considers selling a stake in the World Cup.

"Let me be clear: I had no involvement in this proposal, and I oppose it unequivocally. It is a bad deal for Fifa's member associations, a bad deal for football, and a bad deal for the long-term future of the game.

Game Podcast

Reaction to the biggest story in football

Available now wherever you listen to your podcasts

"After more than 35 years in banking, I understand both the value of this asset and the consequences of giving part of it away. That is why this proposal should be rejected.

"Fifa already has access to extraordinary financial resources. The organisation sits on billions of dollars in reserves and no debt. The Fifa president himself has highlighted the $15 billion [about £11.13 billion] in revenue generated between 2022 and 2026. If member associations believe additional investment is needed to develop the game, Fifa already has the financial capacity to provide that support from its existing resources.

"Against that backdrop, selling a permanent stake in football's most valuable asset to raise $4.2 billion makes little sense. It is mortgaging football's future without any compelling justification."

Cordeiro said the sell-off proposal had become "a defining question for Fifa's future". He added: "Decisions of this magnitude should be made in the interests of football, not those who stand to profit from it."

Infantino had used people connected to Donald Trump's network to prepare for the scheme. However, when asked if the Fifa president had discussed it with him, Trump gave the briefest of comments: "No."

The AFC said it stood "in solidarity with Uefa and Concacaf to protect" the World Cup after European nations said they would boycott Fifa tournaments if the plan to launch Fifa Forward Enterprises (FFE), the proposed commercial subsidiary to manage major Fifa tournaments, continues.

The AFC said: "The AFC stands in solidarity with Uefa and Concacaf in expressing serious concerns over Fifa's proposal to introduce private investment into Fifa's flagship competitions and the decision-making process around FFE.

"That the situation has reached the point where the real possibility of a Fifa World Cup boycott has entered public discourse should concern everyone who cares about the future of our game.

"Against this backdrop … the AFC believes that the proposed FFE cannot realistically achieve the necessary broad consensus and unity required to move forward.

"The Fifa World Cup is the pinnacle of global football and derives its strength from the participation of all confederations and the world's leading football nations. Any proposal that risks undermining the unity and universal character of the competition must be reconsidered."

The AFC said the proposal had "exposed fundamental weaknesses" in Fifa's consultation and decision-making processes. It added: "A proposal of such significance, with the potential to affect the commercial, sporting and strategic future of world football, must not emerge through processes that leave confederations, member associations and even Fifa's own governing bodies, including the Fifa council, feeling sidelined."

Also yesterday came the revelation that Fifa had told member associations that it wants to appoint an agency to look at expanding the World Cup from 48 to 64 teams — with its analysis delivered before the September deadline to vote on the sell-off plan. A Fifa research brief dated July 30, seen by The Times, said the analysis should "not advocate for a predetermined outcome".

In the face of all the backlash, Fifa's latest statement seemed a lame attempt to buy time. "We respect the feedback and concern aired in public and reaffirm our commitment to an open and democratic consultation," it read.

"Our planned consultation process was disrupted by incorrect media reports. We will proceed with this consultation process to ensure that each member association has the ability to express its vote based on facts."

The "incorrect media reports" no doubt referred to The Times breaking the news of Infantino's plan on Tuesday. Football has never had a week like it before.

How opposition grew

> "The project... is not a Fifa project. It is the project of one person"
>
> KEVIN LAMOUR
> FIFA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Uefa's principled World

Kit Shepard

Should Fifa stand firm and force Uefa to follow through with a boycott threat over the proposed World Cup sell-off, then the women's game will supply the first big case study.

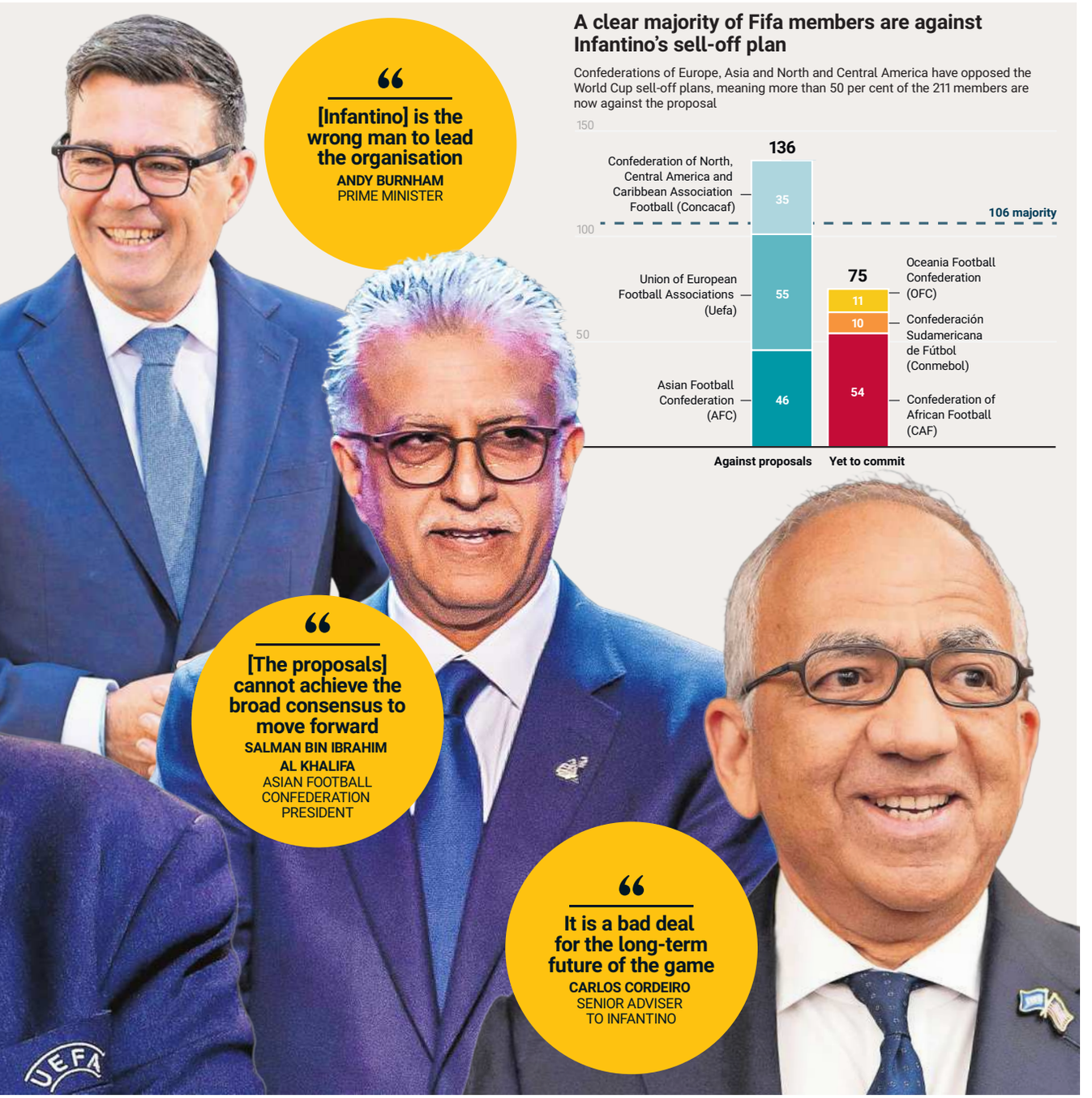
As it stands, judgment day is October 9, when the 2027 Women's World Cup qualifying play-offs are scheduled to begin. England are supposed to play their first leg away to Greece that day, and Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland are in the play-offs too.

The World Cup finals are scheduled to start in Brazil on June 24 next year — three years before Uefa can be subjected to the ultimate test of boycotting a men's World Cup. Such a scenario feels unlikely, given the pace at which confederations are rejecting Fifa's plan to sell stakes in its competitions to private investors. As of yesterday morning, North America and Asia had joined Uefa in opposing Gianni Infantino's scheme, though only the European body has committed to a boycott. In the immediate future, Uefa and its federations believe the ball is in Fifa's court. They hope the possibility of a World Cup without Europe will be enough for the scheme to collapse, and that October's qualifying play-offs can be staged.

For instance, Sarina Wiegman and her England team have not received any instruction besides to prepare for the Greece games as planned. It is considered too early to formulate strategies for individual tournaments, including the Women's Under-20 World Cup in Poland, which runs from September 5 to 27 and is due to feature England.

Still, Fifa's latest stance is that it will press ahead with its consultation process and put the proposal to its 211 associations through a vote, with Infantino saying a decision must be taken by September 19. If the impasse persists, then the play-offs will not take place.

A World Cup without European teams — or no World Cup at all —



A clear majority of Fifa members are against Infantino’s sell-off plan

Confederations of Europe, Asia and North and Central America have opposed the World Cup sell-off plans, meaning more than 50 per cent of the 211 members are now against the proposal

Cup boycott would hurt the women’s game first

would have greater ramifications in women’s football than the men’s equivalent. The women’s game is more reliant on international football for attention and growth, as exemplified by the spikes in interest in the Women’s Super League after England won Euro 2022 and reached the 2023 World Cup final.

For most nations beyond western Europe and North America, the Women’s World Cup is the best chance to exhibit their potential and attract global attention to their challenges, because continental tournaments can be low key and disheartening. At last March’s Women’s Asian Cup, India had to source kits locally after their federation sent them youth-size clothing.

The Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (Wafcon) was postponed 12 days before its scheduled start in March and is now taking place in front of largely empty stadiums in Morocco. At last year’s Copa América Femenina, teams were made to warm up indoors to protect pitches. These incidents are less likely to occur at a World Cup and would gain more attention if they did. So, a boycotted Women’s World Cup would be devastating, and there is a sense of wryness within the sport that it would provide the initial test of Uefa’s nerve.

Women’s football is often the first to be affected when existential issues emerge. Equally, the blame for the tournament appearing to be in jeopardy lies with Fifa, not Uefa. Had it opted to boycott only the next men’s World Cup, then it would have been accused of not valuing women’s football enough to use it as leverage. It would also point out that Fifa’s plans involve selling off 20 per cent of the Women’s World Cup as well as the men’s, meaning any agitation has to include tournaments across genders.

Uefa’s stance could be tested. While there is no suggestion that the British FAs are doing anything besides taking a principled stand, the low attendances and attention for women’s football in other parts of Europe suggest some Uefa nations find a Women’s World Cup boycott more palatable than a men’s one. Infantino also has form for trying to take the moral high ground against European heavyweights in women’s football. The Fifa president threatened not to broadcast the 2023 Women’s World Cup in the UK, Spain, Italy, Germany and France because of “disappointing” offers that were a “slap in the face” of “all women worldwide”.

Nevertheless, women’s football may be uniquely positioned to thwart Fifa, with players already using their platforms to push for progress after generations of prejudice and low support. The Lionesses have lobbied government for greater girls’ access to football. Twelve of the 15 Spain players who withdrew from selection in September 2022 in protest against their federation did not go to the following year’s World Cup, and their concerns were symbolised by Luis Rubiales’s non-consensual kiss of Jenni Hermoso after Spain won the final. It is significant that US Soccer has opposed Infantino’s plans, because its women’s team is a dominant force and has a history of condemning inequality, sexism, and even Infantino’s confidant Donald Trump.

And those continental tournament flashpoints prove that developing women’s football countries can speak out and force change too. Players such as Nigeria’s Rinsola Babajide slammed the Wafcon postponement. India’s players sent a letter to their federation during the kit fiasco. South Korea threatened to boycott this year’s Asian Cup because of “harsh and unreasonable conditions” under their federation. Uruguay convinced their federation to meet demands after refusing to train in protest one week before last year’s Copa América Femenina. At that tournament, teams were eventually allowed to warm up on the pitch after an outcry.

It is unfortunate that women players would feel the impacts of a boycott first — but they may be the best footballers to ensure this extreme option is never exercised.

How the seismic week for football unfolded

Tuesday
The Times reveals Gianni Infantino’s plans to sell off stakes in the World Cup. Fifa issues a press release saying it is beginning a consultation process for its “innovative project”. Uefa releases a statement claiming Fifa has crossed a line, while the prime minister, Andy Burnham, condemns the plan, stating: “The World Cup is not a product.” Disgraced former Fifa president Sepp Blatter dubs the plan “deeply damaging” for football.

Sport
World Cup for sale

Wednesday
Uefa announces it will hold a crisis meeting on Thursday. The Times reveals a letter sent by Infantino to Fifa member nations issuing an ultimatum: sign up to the new plans by September or miss out on a share of $10 billion funding. The FA says it was “completely unaware” of the plans before they were revealed by The Times — a sentiment echoed by Concacaf (representing North America, Central America and the Caribbean) and the Asian Football Confederation.

Sport
Infantino’s ultimatum: 53 days to join sell-off
England set to appoint Fleming

Thursday
Uefa holds its crisis meeting, after which The Times reveals all 55 members will boycott all Fifa competitions until Infantino’s plans are withdrawn and a guarantee is made that private investment will have no place in the World Cup. In a further blow, Concacaf announces its members — including the US — will vote against the proposals.

Sport
World Cup boycott

Friday
Fifa insists it will press on with its plans but the proposal is dealt a double blow: the Asian Football Confederation announces it will not support them and Infantino’s own senior adviser quits in protest. Resigning from his post, Carlos Cordeiro dubs the proposal “a bad deal for football” and claims he was never consulted. Burnham then calls on Infantino to resign before Fifa’s chief operating officer Kevin Lamour denounces the “project of one person”.

Mudryk cleared to play first game since 2024 after doping ban lifted

Peter Rutzler Sydney

The Chelsea winger Mykhailo Mudryk has been cleared to play football again after the doping case against him was resolved in agreement with the FA and the World Anti-Doping Association.

The 25-year-old, who joined Chelsea from Shakhtar Donetsk on an eight-year contract for £89 million in 2023, is now expected to join Xabi Alonso's team on their pre-season tour, having not played for the club since November 2024.

Mudryk was charged by the FA with an anti-doping rule violation in June 2025. He was notified in December 2024 of a positive test result for a low-concentration of meldonium, a banned drug that can improve endurance, and in January he was handed a four-year ban by the FA, which he subsequently has taken to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

However, since then, changes to Wada's scientific guidance have meant that if Mudryk's sample was taken today, he would not have committed an anti-doping violation. An agreement has now been reached between the FA, Wada and Mudryk to resolve the case. As part of that, the Ukraine international has accepted that he had committed an anti-doping rule violation and acceded to a period of ineligibility equal to the time he has already served.

In a statement posted on Instagram, Mudryk said: "After a long battle, the four-year ban that was imposed on me has been rescinded and I am free to resume my career with immediate effect. I am grateful that this process has reached a conclusion, that I have been cleared to return to football and that I can now look ahead to my future.

"This has been the most difficult period of my career. As I have always maintained from the outset of this case, I have never knowingly or intentionally taken any banned substance. My commitment to competing fairly and representing my club and country with professionalism and integrity has always been important to me.

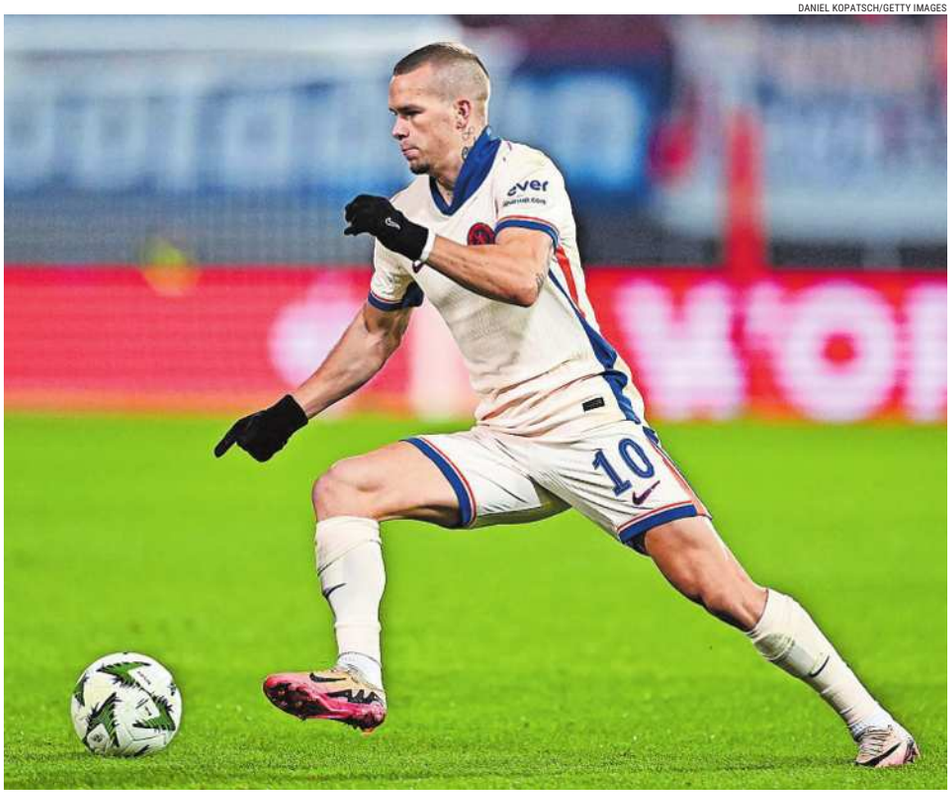
"I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and belief throughout this period.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to everyone at Chelsea FC, my teammates and the Chelsea supporters who have been with me throughout. I would also like to thank my legal team and others who assisted for their tireless work on my case.

"My focus now is on returning to football, working hard every day, and making a positive contribution on the pitch.

"Thank you to everyone who continued to believe in me. I look forward to the next chapter of my career."

DANIEL KOPATSCH/GETTY IMAGES



The FA and Wada reached an agreement to resolve the case of Mudryk, who will join the squad on their pre-season tour

The FA confirmed in a statement that Mudryk "is no longer ineligible and may return to competition with immediate effect", while Chelsea said they would now help the player reintegrate into the squad.

"From the outset, this has been an extremely difficult period for Misha, both professionally and personally, and we are pleased that the matter has now reached a conclusion which allows him to return to football with immediate effect," Chelsea said in a statement.

"We have always supported Misha throughout this process while fully respecting the integrity of the anti-doping system and the legal process.

"We welcome the acknowledgement that advances in the applicable scientific reporting standards for more reliable testing mean that, had Misha's sample been analysed under today's technical requirements, it would not have been reported as a positive test and no anti-doping rule violation would have resulted. That is an important part of the context surrounding the agreed resolution."

Chelsea praised Mudryk, who has made only 73 appearances since moving to Stamford Bridge 3*1/2* years ago, for "conducting himself professionally and with resilience during what has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging periods of his career".

The statement added: "We know how much this opportunity to return means to him. Our focus now is on supporting Misha's reintegration into the squad and helping him resume his career.

"Chelsea FC remains fully committed to the highest standards of sporting integrity and compliance with all anti-doping regulations. Everyone at the club now looks forward to helping Misha return to full fitness, back into the squad and back on to the pitch."

Chelsea escape suspended six-point deduction over payments

Paul Joyce, Matt Lawton

Chelsea have been fined £10 million and handed a suspended two-window ban on signing players by the FA after successfully challenging a previous punishment that could have led to them being docked six points.

Despite admitting 74 charges relating to secret payments to unregistered agents and intermediaries, the club appealed against the imposition of the sporting sanction and the threat of a points deduction has now been removed. The ruling by an FA appeal board was one of three separate investigations by football authorities into aspects of the club's conduct during the tenure of Chelsea's previous owner Roman Abramovich.

The FA said in a statement it was continuing to investigate individual misconduct arising from the case, but would not comment further. It is understood that no one at Chelsea is being investigated. Uefa fined the club £8.6 million in 2023 for submitting incomplete financial information covering transactions from 2012 to 2019, while a £10.75 million sanction was meted out in March after a Premier League probe. All three investigations began after Chelsea's current ownership, BlueCo, self-reported the breaches while in the process of purchasing the club from Abramovich in 2022.

During Abramovich's tenure, it was found that illicit payments were made to players and unlicensed agents to facilitate the transfer of some of their biggest stars. The signings of Eden Hazard, Willian, Ramires, David Luiz, André Schürrle, Nemanja Matic and Samuel Eto'o, plus three unknown players, all involved undisclosed payments of millions of pounds, amounting to £47.5 million. They were made from offshore entities associated with Abramovich.

The majority of the charges in the FA's case related to events between 2010 and 2016, a period in which Chelsea won the Premier League title twice and the Champions League, and covered 44 transactions relating to 32 different players.

In December last year, a regulatory commission hearing the FA's case decided that a "well-established practice existed throughout the club to use unauthorised agents/unregistered intermediaries, to pay them, and to conceal their involvement and those payments from the FA.

"In some cases, sham agreements, contracts and roles were created, in order to avoid detection and to acquire players, seemingly at all costs."

The commission added: "Those who were then ... in control of the club and running its activities on a day-to-day basis, reveals a shameful and arrogant disregard for the rules of the game, and which has done so much to bring the game of football in general, and the name of CFC into disrepute."

The commission said that Chelsea had intended to gain a sporting advantage and did gain an actual one by its misconduct as it deprived "clubs with which it was in direct competition of a fair opportunity of having them [players] in their squad".

The imposition of a six-point deduction was suspended until June 2027 along with the £10 million fine. The written reasons into the case — some of which remain redacted — show the fine was initially set at £26 million but reduced because of Chelsea's co-operation and guilty pleas. Similarly, the regulatory commission initially had the points deduction set at 15 but mitigating factors brought it down.

Hazard was one of the signings that involved undisclosed payments

The FA had gone into the hearing not intent on seeking a points deduction, which was supported by Chelsea. A letter from the Premier League also proposed that "a points deduction, if implemented, would have very serious implications not only on the club, but also potentially significant ramifications for other clubs playing in the same competition". It added that points deductions should be overseen by the "league running the competition". The regulatory commission's subsequent decision to impose a suspended points penalty was the only part of the ruling challenged by Chelsea. The £10 million fine was accepted and will be invested into grassroots football.

During the appeal, the board found there was insufficient evidence to support the original finding that Chelsea did gain an actual sporting advantage and the sanction of a suspended points deduction was deemed "excessive". The downgrading of the punishment to a registration ban for two complete and consecutive transfer windows, suspended until June 30, 2027, means the club can continue to sign players this summer and in January 2027 as long as the relevant rules are not breached again before the end of June next year.

Throughout the written reasons, the fact that BlueCo voluntarily flagged the misconduct is deemed to be "exceptional co-operation". In a statement, Chelsea said: "In 2022, the club self-reported potential historical rule breaches to all applicable regulators. Following that report, it has worked openly and transparently with all regulators, including voluntarily and proactively disclosing many thousands of documents.

"As previously announced, settlement agreements have been entered into with Uefa and the Premier League concerning the same self-reported regulatory matters and topics that have been addressed before.

"The club is pleased to confirm that, now the FA process has concluded, this brings all regulatory proceedings against the club to a close. We are grateful to Uefa, the Premier League and the FA for their engagement with the club throughout these processes."

Palmer: I'll have bailiffs at Rogers' door if he does my celebration

Chelsea star on Alonso, keeping friend's move a secret and falling asleep during the epic Mexico game. By **Peter Rutzler**

Cole Palmer says he struggled to keep the secret that his old friend Morgan Rogers would be joining Chelsea this summer, with the pair exchanging messages as the move developed. "I was just speaking to Morgs, he told me straight away when he was coming," Palmer says. "It didn't get leaked. Nobody knew. Just me and him and the higher people at the club. So it was a difficult secret to keep. But I kept it."

The smile that swept across his face at the first mention of Rogers's name gave away his delight at Chelsea's decision to sign his former Manchester City academy team-mate, breaking the record for a British player, spending £117 million to acquire him from Aston Villa. But he will not be yielding on his "shiver" celebration, which he had trademarked in November last year.

"This is just the media, this," Palmer says, laughing. "We've never spoken about it. It's one of them. He does it. I do it. I've trademarked it so if he tries to do anything, he'll have the bailiffs at his door! Nah, we'll do it together."

At Sky Park, the training ground of Sydney FC, at Macquarie University Sports Fields, Palmer is holding court before a pre-season game with Tottenham Hotspur in the Sydney Super Cup today. He is refreshed after a summer trying to work out what to do with his time, following his omission from Thomas Tuchel's England squad for the World Cup. He will use that as motivation.

"Naturally, it's like anything. If someone told you that you're essentially not good enough to get in the squad, then you're going to think, like, all right, whatever then, try to go that extra [bit] harder," he says.

He is asked if he watched the team. "I watched some of [the World Cup]. Obviously I was away and the times were a bit mad in America. It was a bit difficult. But I did watch. I managed to stay up for England-Mexico. But then I fell asleep at half-time.

"I'm not really thinking about [returning to the England fold] now, to be honest. I'm just looking forward to the season with Chelsea, and I'm not too bothered about that."

Palmer, 24, has spent the summer recuperating, the first time he has been able to take time out for an extended period, without a summer tournament, during his senior career. In 2023 he took part in the Under-21 European Championship, before playing for the senior team at Euro 2024 and then the Club World Cup last summer.

"My summer was great," he says. "I had seven weeks off or summat. Which I've never really had. It was good. I went on holiday with my family and that. I feel fresh."

Did he know what to do with himself? "Nah," he says. "Not in the first week. It was strange. I didn't know where to go. I went on holiday and was thinking, 'Where do I go next?' And checking when I was back in. To be fair, I got bored after like six weeks. I was sat in Marbella thinking, 'I want to go back in', and I never thought I'd think that."

Palmer enters a new season off the back of an injury-plagued campaign, mainly in his groin, and the midfielder confirmed for the first time that he did consider surgery to resolve his issues.

"Yeah I went to Sweden or Denmark, one of those countries, to see a doctor," he says. "We did speak about it. But I didn't end up getting it.

"I didn't really know how to deal with it. The first few months, with me being injured, I just wanted to go out and play. Which I probably shouldn't have done. Obviously I couldn't play how I wanted to play. It was a bad season personally with injuries and stuff but I feel good now. The seven weeks obviously helped. I'm ready to go again."

Palmer says the new Chelsea manager, Xabi Alonso, spoke to him about his England omission. "When I got told I wasn't going to the World Cup, I think he knew, so he messaged me," he says. "I can't remember what he said. I think he said don't worry about it or whatever, normal stuff. It was nice."

Palmer says Alonso envisages him playing in the No 10 role, and the Spaniard senses the key to igniting Palmer again is helping him to enjoy his football. "My feeling is that he loves the game and he wants to enjoy it," Alonso said.

"I see that he's in a very positive mindset, with a very good mentality, very open to talking about football, to talk about what the team needs. His role in the team, he's going to be a leader on the pitch, so the better Cole we have, the better Chelsea we will have. I think that having a proper training, proper preparation, is going to be important for him and you see that he's really focused on that and we are connecting, we are getting each other and so far I like his personality."

Palmer is enjoying a new era under the Spanish 2010 World Cup winner, calling him "a breath of fresh air with his ideas".

The new signings, with Maxence Lacroix joining from Crystal Palace for £52 million after Rogers, have maintained Palmer's confidence in the Chelsea project. "When you sign good players, obviously your team is going to be better," he says. "So it should be a good season."

De Zerbi: £237m spending spree brings 'zero pressure'

Peter Rutzler Sydney

Roberto De Zerbi said Tottenham's unprecedented spending this summer adds "zero pressure" to his work as he revealed he expects to sign "two to three" more players this summer.

De Zerbi said on Thursday that the club are working on another "bomba" signing before the end of the transfer window, after bringing in Sandro Tonali, Mateus Fernandes and Jan Paul van Hecke for £237 million.

De Zerbi suggested that the word "bomba" has a different meaning in Italian than English, but when pressed on the meaning, which translates as either "bomb" or "bombshell", he referenced Tottenham's major deals.

"I think Tonali, Mateus Fernandes, Marcos Senesi, Andy Robertson are bomba for me, top players for us," he said. "You can write what you want, no problem and no pressure, but I said we have to complete the transfer market.

"I think we have some other players to complete the squad and the players will be here in the next days. For me, it's top players.

"I don't know if the expectations are bigger than two days ago, but we have to go forward and think about the good of the team, the club and the squad."

Asked if Tottenham's outlay, already the highest by the club for a single season and with six signings when factoring in the free deals of Senesi, Robertson and Martin Dubravka, puts pressure on him to succeed, De Zerbi said: "I have zero pressure. You know why? Because one day a taxi driver in London stopped me to congratulate me for the transfer market. He said, 'Hey, you are spending a lot of money.' I said: 'But are you a fan of Arsenal? Haven't Arsenal spent money for a long time in the last three or four years?'

"I think Manchester City, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal, to stay at the top of the table, have spent money. If you want to compete now for the top of the Premier League and put Tottenham at a high level, we need to bring top players, like we are doing."

De Zerbi said that James Maddison had a "small problem" and like Fernandes, who has fatigue in a calf, would not be risked in today's pre-season fixture with Chelsea at the Accor Stadium in Sydney.

The Tottenham head coach paid tribute to Franco Baresi, the former Italy and AC Milan defender, who has died aged 66.

De Zerbi, a former AC Milan youth player and attacking midfielder, trained with Baresi during the early years of his career.

"I grew up in the Milan Academy, and when I was 15 or 16 I worked a lot with the first team," said De Zerbi.

"He's from my city (Brescia) also. He was the best defender in the world. Great captain, great player, and I'm really, really sad for him.

"He was the captain of Milan, but also on the national team. And for the people, many guys, I spoke with many players today, and they don't know, they never watched him as a player, but he was incredible. Maybe better than (Paolo) Maldini, and Maldini was another top, top, top (defender). But Baresi was incredible.

"An inspiration to me not as a position on the pitch, because he was a defender and I played as an attacker, but as a personality, as a leader. I think his leadership was with or without words, he was an incredible personality, very strong."

£26m Silva to Bournemouth

Peter Rutzler

Bournemouth are close to completing a £26 million deal for Benfica defender António Silva.

The 22-year-old centre back is travelling to the south coast for a medical. He has 20 caps for Portugal.

Bournemouth will pay an initial £21.4 million with a further £4.3 million due in add-ons.

Silva's move was negotiated earlier in the window but Benfica, now coached by Marco Silva, wanted to keep him for their Europa League play-off with St Gallen.

Bournemouth are in Austria for pre-season as their new head coach, Marco Rose, prepares for his first campaign with the club.

Ian Hawkey

Baresi was a swan among ducks and heart of Milan side who changed football

ALESSANDRO SABATTINI/GETTY IMAGES

No Milan player has worn the No 6 shirt since Baresi, left, who lifted three European Cups as club captain, right. He led Italy to the 1994 World Cup final but missed in the shoot-out as they were beaten by Brazil on penalties, below. Baresi ranked Maradona, above, as his toughest opponent

Few footballers set standards as lasting as Franco Baresi, the former AC Milan and Italy captain who has died aged 66.

No Milan player has, since his retirement in 1997, worn the club's No 6 jersey, on the principle that its last owner gave it an authority no other shoulders could ever be broad enough to bear the weight of. Listen to almost anybody explain niche tactical terms fashionable in the 1980s and 1990s and soon enough they will cite Baresi as the best embodiment of what they mean: no one played the *libero* role quite like him, with his rare gift for gliding into midfield to carry the ball forward or deliver just the right pass. Oh, coaches of his era would sigh, if only we had a "sweeper" with the anticipation, strength and ease in possession of a Baresi.

He was, said Arrigo Sacchi, the Milan coach with whom Baresi coincided over five seasons: "The tactical heart of the Milan that changed European football."

Sacchi meant that, with Baresi as the astute marshal of his defence, space could be squeezed, opponents pressed all the more effectively, and that this same superhero who was corralling a bold, high defensive line would also be the first to launch transitions into attack.

Besides Milan's enduring impact on how elite football was — and is — played, Baresi's team dominated like no other. Their successive European Cups in 1989 and 1990 would be the last back-to-back titles in club football's most prestigious competition until Real Madrid emulated the achievement in 2017.

To talk to Sven-Goran Eriksson, the former England manager and losing Benfica coach in the 1990 final, would be to hear a simple summing-up of that game. It had been close, Milan winning 1-0. The difference between the two sides? "Baresi," Eriksson shrugged. "He was everywhere."

Milan won the Champions League again in 1994, by which time Baresi's leadership had become such a touchstone that the head coach at the time, Fabio Capello — not a man given to ceding authority — just listened quietly as Baresi, suspended, briefed the other defenders on the way to the stadium on how to tame their rivals. Capello simply added: "You've heard the skipper, now go out and win." Milan thrashed a much heralded Barcelona 4-0.

"He was an example to everybody, the sort of player any coach dreams of having in their team, not only for his intelligence on the field, but the strength he transmitted to others," Capello said in tribute.

To Diego Maradona, a combatant over five seasons in a Serie A that was then the leading domestic league in Europe, Baresi ranked as his toughest dueller because of his uncanny timing and discretion. "Claudio Gentile [a notoriously rugged Juventus defender of the 1970s and 1980s] would stop me by kicking me," Maradona said. "Baresi stole the ball from under my feet without touching me."

This immaculate mastery of defensive technique allied to the midfielder's vision was given in service only to Milan throughout Baresi's 20-year club career. Before his debut in 1977, he had suffered hardship and setback, orphaned at 14, and rejected as a teenager by Inter Milan, reportedly in part because of his small stature. The adult Baresi, at a little over 5ft 9in, was no giant. In time, he would inspire many aspiring central defenders to know that height need not be the primary recommendation for excellence.

Inter, for whom Franco's older brother Beppe, a fellow international, would enjoy a distinguished career, lived through more than 700 reminders of why they ought to have taken on a pair of Baresis, not just the one. The younger sibling played 719 times for Milan, remaining there when they were relegated in 1980, a punishment for institutional involvement in a betting scandal, before emerging as the fulcrum of Sacchi's far-reaching, innovative game plan.

He was first called up by the Azzurri at 20, and, still uncapped, taken to the 1982 World Cup in Spain, where Italy triumphed in the final, Baresi watching from the bench in the back-up role he held through the tournament.

It would be the start of a tantalising relationship with World Cups: first place as a non-playing squad member at his first; third place, and chief pillar of the competition's best defence, when Italy hosted the 1990 World Cup; a heartbreaking silver medal as Sacchi's national team captain in 1994.

So vital was Baresi to that Italy side that, on sustaining a knee injury midway through the group phase, he immediately underwent surgery and barely three weeks later started the final. To Brazil's principal goalscorer, the wounded Baresi seemed ubiquitous.

"Whenever I turned or received the ball, there was Baresi," Romario said of the 120 goalless minutes. Baresi would then be chosen to take Italy's first penalty — he had an expertise with spot kicks — in the losing shoot-out, among three Italians who failed to convert.

A worldwide audience saw Baresi in tears after the defeat, a striking tableau for a sportsman synonymous with coolness and control. He was never showy and anything but a chatterbox in public. After his playing days were over, he would joke that "once I retired, I learnt to speak".

Plenty spoke eloquently for him. The de luxe *libero*, the supreme sweeper (even in a back four) was, for the doyen of Italian football writers, Gianni Brera, "a swan among ducks". The commentator Carlo Pellegatti nicknamed him "Mahatma", detecting a Gandhian serenity to Baresi's work.

He was often "The Kaizer", a nod to Franz Beckenbauer. He was an idol to other idols. "You taught me to fight to the last, and the value of true leadership," posted Paolo Maldini, a team-mate through more than 450 matches for Milan and Italy. "You did that by example, daily: with few words but many deeds."

Analysing ’66 final with tools of today

We all know about Hurst’s historic feat but **Dan Atherton** mines the data to reveal who else excelled at Wembley

Sixty years on from July 30, 1966, England’s World Cup victory continues to stand alone as the nation’s greatest moment in football.

The image of Bobby Moore holding the Jules Rimet Trophy aloft at Wembley is etched into our collective memory, yet few people who were not alive back then have ever watched the full 120 minutes that preceded those scenes.

With the help of Opta data, The Times assesses some of the key performances that helped define the game.

West Germany went into the match having never managed to beat the Three Lions. In fact, they suffered a 1-0 friendly defeat by Alf Ramsey’s men in February of the same year, a game best known for Nobby Stiles recording his only international goal.

Today, the notion that England possessed a psychological edge over their German opponents is a novel thought.

Despite scoring four goals in the final, England’s success before that day was built from the back. They had let in only one goal during the run to the final (against Portugal in the semi-final).

West Germany set up in a 4-2-4 formation, the conventional system of its time, while England opted for an unchanged XI for the third game in a row.

Although many assume Ramsey’s “wingless wonders” system was a constant throughout the World Cup, it became a feature only during the knockout phase.

When those contrasting styles collided on the pitch, very little separated them, despite what the scoreline suggests.

The two teams ended up recording similar figures across a range of key metrics, such as total shots, pass accuracy and possession.

The way in which England and West Germany accumulated those statistics was vastly different, however. The host nation played on the break while West Germany utilised a more methodical game and put a greater emphasis on set pieces, recording more than twice the number of opportunities from such situations compared with England (11 to five).

Over the course of the 120 minutes, a whopping 79 efforts were registered across both teams. That is comfortably the most ever seen in a World Cup final — what’s more, that is the highest total recorded in any World Cup fixture.

There were seven attempts on goal in the first ten minutes of this game, all of them from outside the box. England’s Martin Peters was a key source of these attempts, racking up five shots in the first 14 minutes, all of which were taken from long range. That was almost as many as every other player on the pitch combined to that point (six total shots).

Less than a third of all of the total shots in the game came from inside the box. Although this was a key feature of the match, none of the six goals were scored from outside the penalty area.

Helmut Haller opened the scoring at Wembley, getting on the scoresheet during this frenetic opening period. His strike in the 13th minute was West Germany’s first shot on target. Haller had already scored five goals at the tournament. Only Portugal’s Eusébio (nine) bagged more than the six registered by the West German at the 1966 World Cup.

Despite breaking the deadlock early and possessing a clear goalscoring threat, Haller would go on to attempt only one more shot on goal. Instead, his role was to get balls into the box for his team-mates. He put in 12 crosses, but only two of them found their intended target.

Haller’s contribution from this game is better remembered for how he held on to the match ball for decades, despite Geoff Hurst’s hat-trick.

Two of the best attacking performances at this game came from Sigfried Held and Alan Ball. Their displays were somewhat reflective of each other. Held created seven chances, the most ever recorded in a World Cup final, and attempted 12 dribbles (completing six of them).

Ball was only 21 years old but was the engine of England’s midfield, as Bobby Charlton was locked in a man-marking stalemate with Franz Beckenbauer. Indeed, no pair were engaged in more duels than the two talismen (seven — four of those won by Beckenbauer).

Ball operated across the midfield and frequently swapped flanks with Peters to keep the opponents guessing. The system meant the Blackpool youngster Ball was required to drift wide when space opened up. According to StatSports, Ball travelled the furthest distance of any England player (8.55km).

There were no substitutions allowed in this game, and as fatigue began to take effect from the second half onwards, Ball took advantage. He logged more dribbles (seven) than any of his team-mates, four of which came in extra time, and he had the most touches of any attacking player in the game (105). He was also responsible for a team-high ten crosses, the pick of which resulted in Hurst’s second goal.

Bobby Moore and Jack Charlton were imperious for England in this match, but they played vastly different roles. Moore, particularly in the first half, would maraud forward and it was his quick-thinking that prompted him to take an early free kick which resulted in Hurst’s opening goal. He possessed a real attacking threat down the left-hand side in this final, highlighted by the fact that he managed to create a joint-high six chances for England.

The West Ham United defender turned provider again, and it was for Hurst once more, as the striker made it 4-2 at the end of the game. Moore is one of only two players ever to claim multiple assists in a single World Cup final, Brazil’s Pelé joining him in that exclusive club just four years later.

The England captain also put in a solid defensive display, winning possession significantly more than anyone else that day (17 times). Once he regained the ball he was reliable with it, recording a match-high 94 per cent passing accuracy, and he touched the ball more often than anybody else (106 touches).

Jack Charlton’s task was far more specific: keep the ball well away from the penalty area. He won more duels than anybody else (13 — including five of his six aerial duels) and no player that day registered more headed clearances (11).

Although Jack Charlton’s passing accuracy was several notches below Moore’s (63 per cent), it was not his job to start neat passages of play. He was there to get the ball out of harm’s way, and he did it exceptionally.

Hurst’s performance will ultimately be what is remembered most, however. Unsurprisingly he had more shots on target than anyone else (five) but what is less known is that he was a physical threat up top. He frequently dropped deeper and to the left flank to hold up the ball. Indeed, only Jack Charlton (five) won more aerial duels for England than Hurst (four).

His three-goal effort was the only instance of a player scoring a hat-trick in a World Cup final until Kylian Mbappé matched the feat in 2022.

As electrifying as Mbappé’s display in Qatar was, his three goals ultimately failed to get France over the line against Argentina.

Hurst, of course, managed to do so — even if, as Germany fans have argued for decades, his controversial second goal didn’t technically get over the line either.

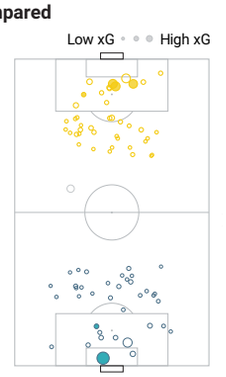
Match stats

England 4 **West Germany** 2

HT 1-1

England		West Germany
2.92	Expected goals	2.35
42	Total shots (inc blocks)	37
12	Shots on target	10
25	Touches in the opp box	30
48.8%	Possession	51.2%
368	Passes successful	397
76%	Passing accuracy	78.9%
21	Fouls conceded	15
1	Yellow cards	0
0	Red cards	0

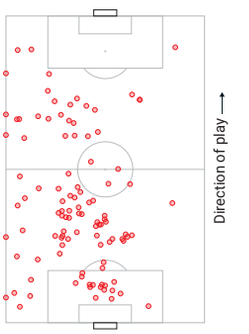
Shots compared



England
4 goals
42 shots
0.07 xG per shot

West Germany
2 goals
37 shots
0.06 xG per shot

Bobby Moore touches



Captain Root is unappealing, but

Star batsman has limitations as a leader but brings qualities to role when Fleming will offer focus, says **Mike Atherton**

"This special situation this year has made it necessary for an experienced player to be at the helm. I'll be looking to restore some lost guidance." Those words of Bobby Simpson, who returned to captain a depleted Australia team in the late 1970s for a second stint, could equally have come from the mouth of Joe Root this week, after he agreed to perform a similar role at a time of upheaval.

Having done it for five years and been broken by the experience at the end, Root is an unappealing choice as captain but he is the best option in the circumstances. It would be interesting to know where those who disagree with his promotion would have turned instead? To Harry Brook, already in demand as a three-format player and as captain of two white-ball teams, who has shown little aptitude for leadership so far? To Jacob Bethell, so young, so unestablished and with so much to prove? AN Other?

Some would suggest a finesse of the Brook situation. Remove him, say, from the T20 job, given there is no World Cup in that format until 2028, and allow him to lead in Tests and ODIs, with the Ashes and 50-over World Cup close at hand. But the T20 side is the only one functioning right now; that move would require Brook to captain under two different coaches and, in any event, he has done little to deserve the highest honour in the game being thrust upon him at this point in time.

Splitting the captaincy between coaches and leaving Brook to the white-ball roles with Brendon McCullum, with whom he clearly gets on brilliantly, is cleaner. This way he can concentrate on an area in which he has had some success, while playing at close quarters in Test cricket under a different coach. In England colours, Brook has only ever known McCullum as coach; playing under the new Test coach Stephen Fleming may well broaden his horizons and outlook, and make him a better option for the future.

As for Root, he brings undoubted qualities to the role: his personal example is impeccable; he carries the total respect of his teammates and is guaranteed a place in the team. He has been there and done it and knows the challenges and pitfalls. He has also shown some evident limitations, too, around his tactical feel for the game, and he lacks the inspirational qualities as a leader of, say, Ben Stokes. But needs must.

That Root is no panacea was made clear when he stepped into the breach at the Oval against New Zealand, though he was dealt a very poor hand on that occasion. Those close to him said he viewed the opportunity as a free hit, but it soon turned sour and he must have been reminded all too quickly about how difficult the job can be and how horrible it feels when things go wrong. It didn't take long at the Oval for Root to lose his cool.

Some say it may possibly destabilise him as a batsman, and he should be left to score runs in the quest to overtake Sachin Tendulkar's record Test haul. But there was no evidence of the burden of leadership affecting his game the first time around. His returns dropped a touch as captain, but he still averaged a tick over 46. He may not be able to sustain the rare brilliance of the past few years since giving up the captaincy, but not many can play at that level for a long period and, at 35, he should be getting to that point (or ought to be) where the peak has passed.

It is unusual to get a second stab at the job having done it for so long, unless in a caretaker role. Simpson's story was the most unusual of any: he had retired from first-class cricket a decade earlier and was into his forties when the Australian captaincy came calling again. But this was an Australia team that had been ruptured by defections to Kerry Packer's World Series and Simpson, still fit and scoring runs in grade cricket, was regarded as the best man for a crisis.

He enjoyed some initial success, scoring a bucketful of runs and leading Australia to a series win at home against India. But then came the Caribbean and defeat and, ripe old age that he was, the Caribbean was no place for a 42-year-old batsman. It was a short-lived experiment, though the benefits of a returning greybeard were clear for a short while.

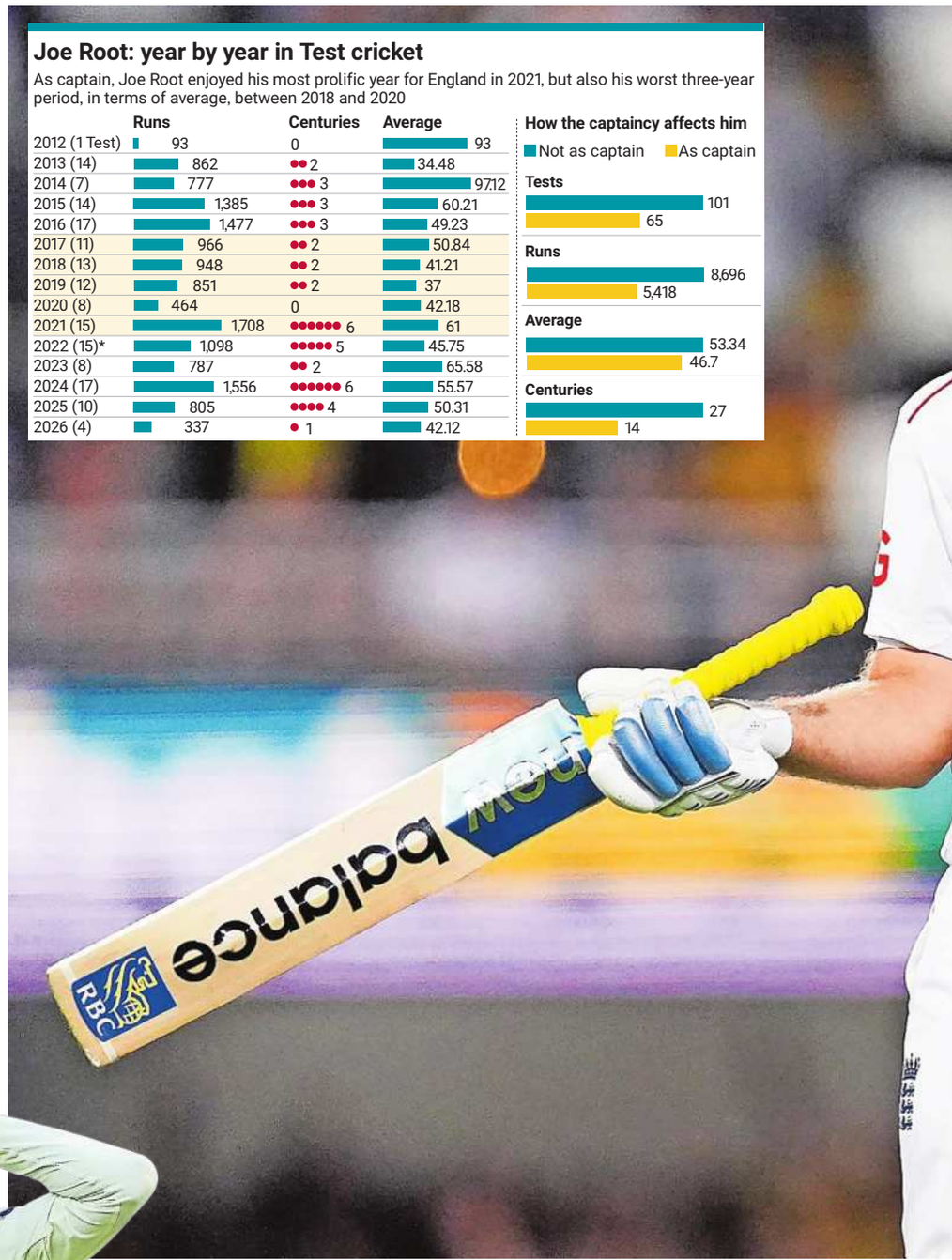
Closer to home, the precedents are rare. Mike Brearley returned as the éminence grise in 1981 and sprinkled his magic over Ian Botham, Bob Willis, Headingley and the Ashes. But his was always going to be a stopgap appointment and he never intended to tour in the winter. In the Caribbean, Brian Lara had two separate attempts at the job, but neither was conspicuously successful as the slide from the glory days continued.

Perhaps the closest equivalent to Root's return now was that of David Gower, who was appointed for a second stint in 1989 three years after his first. Gower was actually the second choice of Ted Dexter, the chairman of selectors, but the first choice, Mike Gatting, had been vetoed by the authorities. Like Root, Gower had enjoyed some success first time around, winning the Ashes and in India, but was regarded as world-class batsman first, captain second.

Gower was 32 in 1989 and his appointment was not intended as a short-term measure. Had the Ashes gone well that summer, he would have continued in the job, but a shambolic few months put paid to that. He, too, was dealt a poor hand: a strong Australia side, and the defection of the South African rebels, sealed his fate. His return was short-lived.

All these instances have one common factor: the return of an old hand happens only at a time of dislocation or crisis. Simpson was trying to piece together a team torn apart by Packer: Brearley followed Botham's loss of form and pair at Lord's; Gower, in 1989, followed a summer before when England had burnt through four captains. That much is true now, though the appointment of Fleming as coach will bring some much needed calm and focus. The Pakistan series to come has echoes of 1999 against New Zealand, when the team played under temporary leadership, while the appointed coach, Duncan Fletcher, bided his time. The captain of New Zealand then? Fleming, of course. The biggest regret of the present situation is that by the time Fleming takes up the reins a whole summer will have been wasted: six precious Tests that a new coach could have used to establish himself if only swifter, more decisive action had been taken after the Ashes.

None of this is Root's fault, of course. His return is far from an ideal situation, and reflects both the absence of senior leadership in the team and the present dislocation, but he has answered the call again — as he has throughout his distinguished career.



Joe Root: year by year in Test cricket

As captain, Joe Root enjoyed his most prolific year for England in 2021, but also his worst three-year period, in terms of average, between 2018 and 2020

	Runs	Centuries	Average
2012 (1 Test)	93	0	93
2013 (14)	862	2	34.48
2014 (7)	777	3	97.12
2015 (14)	1,385	3	60.21
2016 (17)	1,477	3	49.23
2017 (11)	966	2	50.84
2018 (13)	948	2	41.21
2019 (12)	851	2	37
2020 (8)	464	0	42.18
2021 (15)	1,708	6	61
2022 (15)*	1,098	5	45.75
2023 (8)	787	2	65.58
2024 (17)	1,556	6	55.57
2025 (10)	805	4	50.31
2026 (4)	337	1	42.12

How the captaincy affects him

Not as captain / As captain

	Not as captain	As captain
Tests	101	65
Runs	8,696	5,418
Average	53.34	46.7
Centuries	27	14

Anything is possible with Ben, says Key on comeback

Elizabeth Ammon

Rob Key has left the door open for Ben Stokes to come out of international retirement to play in next summer's Ashes series.

Stokes, 35, announced his retirement from international cricket during England's Test against New Zealand in

who else was there?

ROBBIE STEPHENSON/PA

An unburdened Root scores his first century on Australian soil at the Gabba during the winter, a far cry from his final days as a captain in 2022 in his first stint, inset left

June. There was speculation that Stokes had been disappointed with the way he was treated by the England hierarchy, feeling he received a lack of backing from Key, the ECB's managing director, over the incident at a Chelsea nightclub. However, when asked if the door was still open to Stokes returning to face Australia, Key said: "It would be a brilliant story if he does."

Stokes has continued playing for Durham and is likely to accept overseas franchise contracts. Asked whether Stokes had been in touch about a possible return, Key said: "No, he hasn't, but I wouldn't be surprised, anything's possible with Ben."

Key was speaking after the appointment of Stephen Fleming as England's new Test head coach, and said he believed that with the former New Zealand skipper and Joe Root, who has been reappointed as Test captain, the ECB has "two of the best people to take forward what is a side with a huge amount of potential".

Fleming knows Stokes, having been his head coach at Rising Pune Supergiants during the 2017 IPL season. There has been plenty of speculation that a change in leadership may open the door for a Test return.

Fleming, 53, will not take charge for England's next Test series, which starts at Headingley on August 19, against Pakistan. He has family commitments, and Key defended the decision to allow the new coach to miss the series, in which England will be led by the assistant coach Marcus Trescothick.

"It wasn't a stipulation for any of the candidates [for head coach] that you had to be there for Pakistan. Had that been the case, that would have limited the field drastically," Key said. "It was about trying to get the best person."

It is likely that Fleming will fly to the UK in September, but he is having discussions with Root and Trescothick about the Pakistan series. Key said that one of the factors in appointing Fleming was his knowledge of the English game. He said: "He's played in it and he has a huge love for the county game, in particular what it did for him."

Addressing criticism that England have not been able to find a standout English candidate, Key said it was something he and Fleming had discussed.

"We have a duty to bring coaches through. We've tried to make a lot of moves in how we educate coaches [in domestic cricket] and how we get the best people qualified. It's not happened quickly enough but that is a massive part of what we're going to try to do. It's a thing that English sport has not had — people at the top being English, and that's something we're trying to fix."

'Clicky' fell foul of nebulous spirit but what is cheating?

Steve James

One wonders what Ricky Ponting makes of it all. The play on his name, by which the portly slip fielder accused of clicking his fingers to deceive umpires in caught-behind decisions has become known as "Clicky Ponting", is funny, and has certainly stuck, but it must be stressed immediately that Ponting and cheating are not linked.

Yes, other Australians are inextricably linked with the dark arts after the Sandpapergate scandal in South Africa in 2018 — and that undoubtedly was cheating — as were this chap's actions in a second XI match in the North Yorkshire and South Durham League, provided they are proved to be what they appear to be on social media. And they certainly do not look good there.

But I say all that in full knowledge that such behaviour is not specifically covered within the Laws of Cricket, and that the game is a mass of grey areas and contradictions when it comes to what is acceptable or not.

The clicking would presumably come under "Law 41.2: Unfair actions" but, by assessing the balance of fair and unfair, already we are having to address that most curious of influences in our wonderful game — the spirit of cricket.

It is addressed in the preamble to the Laws and was once described very aptly by my colleague Mike Atherton as "a lot of well-meaning guff". It says: "Cricket owes much of its appeal and enjoyment to the fact that it should be played not only according to the Laws, but also within the Spirit of Cricket. The major responsibility for ensuring fair play rests with the captains, but extends to all players, match officials and, especially in junior cricket, teachers, coaches and parents."

The preamble does say: "Respect is central to the Spirit of Cricket," and I'm sure we showed opponents and officials respect, but I would hope that we did that in all walks of our lives. It should be a basic human requirement. But then humans are all far from perfect and so cricket is like all other sports in that it will possess its share of wrong 'uns. Competitive juices do not always produce probity.

The nebulousness of the Spirit of Cricket epitomises a game that has spawned the cliché "it's not cricket" but has easily forgotten that the origin of that phrase was a response to a match-fixing crisis in the early 19th century. There has been a smorgasbord of scandals ever since. As Richie Benaud said, it has always been the "most controversial of all games".

The grey areas, though, have always fascinated and befuddled me. Is not walking when you edge behind cheating? That's what the opposition imply with their insults if you get away with one, even if they themselves only walk when out of petrol.

Why did 'Clicky' go to such lengths to try to win a second XI club game?

Is appealing when you definitely know the batter is not out cheating? How about claiming a catch that obviously bounces? What about the stumping of Jonny Bairstow in the 2023 Ashes? As for "Mankad" run-outs, they fuel a divided fury like few other incidents.

The scrutiny upon international cricket these days means very little can go unnoticed at that level, but it is in the lower echelons that the nefarious can mainly sate their urges. Asked about "Clicky", the Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood said: "I'd say that stuff's been going on for 100 years and it's just now with livestreaming that people have picked it up."

Perhaps my experiences as a club cricketer were a little sheltered, then, playing in the now defunct Three Counties League that straddled the Anglo-Welsh border and took in some delightfully beautiful grounds like Abergavenny, Usk and our own Lydney. I might have been horribly naive but I never encountered one act that was likely to damage the reputation of the individual, his team or the league.

There were no neutral umpires then either, with each team bringing their own and, from memory, very few arguments ensuing. They were gentler, and certainly quieter, days, because cricket at all levels has become a very noisy game, with chat and banter treading a fine line with abuse, and the threat of physical violence that that brings.

And it was the umpire in the "Clicky" video to whom my mind first turned. Why one earth would anyone want to spend a Saturday doing that if that is how they are to be (allegedly) treated? That it was only a second XI game is all the more baffling. Not that lower-level cricket cannot be competitive, but to go to such lengths to win at that standard?

It is also likely that others were aware of what was going on. Peer policing is often the most effective and the best teams usually possess a strong core of senior players who lead in attitude, performance and standards. That is where Steve Smith and David Warner so disgraced themselves in Sandpapergate.

Bouncing the ball into the wicket-keeper off dusty wicket ends to scuff up the ball? Using mints to promote conventional swing? Was that cheating? If so I was a cheat then, even if I did always walk when edging the ball after an incident as a youngster when I didn't do so and the opposing county second XI skipper shoulder-charged me.

That was a rare example of two wrongs making a right, but the truth of this whole matter is that it is full of contradictions. The Laws of the Game cannot cover everything, leaving its participants to use their inherent and instilled sense of right and wrong to determine their behaviour.

That inevitably varies, but we can all agree that "Clicky" (no other name is required) got that horribly wrong if he was indeed doing what it seems, in which case, a lengthy ban should suffice.

Problem positions Borthwick must fix for World Cup

With about a year to go until the 33-man unit is picked, **Charlie Morgan** takes a close look at England's resources

With about a year until Steve Borthwick assembles his 33-man squad to travel to Australia for the World Cup and just nine Tests until the warm-up games for that tournament take place, England's head coach will be conducting his own audit. Here is ours, delving into the positions that need clarity and those that look to be in good shape.

LOOSE-HEAD PROP
Senior game time in 2025-26 Ellis Genge, Bevan Rodd, Fin Baxter, Asher Opoku-Fordjour, Beno Obano, Emmanuel Iyogun.
England A game time in 2025-26 Iyogun, Opoku-Fordjour, Obano, Tarek Haffar, Archie van der Flier.

The return of Baxter from a troublesome foot injury, which will ease the load on Genge and even allow England's vice-captain to be used as an impact replacement, feels extremely important. A race for the third spot could get interesting. Has Iyogun overtaken Rodd, who came off the bench in all five Six Nations games? It may be that Borthwick leans on the versatility of Opoku-Fordjour to fit in another tight-head or travel with five props and bring another back-rower to the World Cup.

These are minor quibbles. Notwithstanding last-quarter fragility in Johannesburg, Tom Harrison has the England scrum in a healthy place.

HOOKER
Senior game time in 2025-26 Jamie George, Luke Cowan-Dickie, Theo Dan.
England A game time in 2025-26 Jamie Blamire, Kepu Tuipulotu, Nathan Jibulu, Dan.
Other contenders Gabriel Oghre, Curtis Langdon, Craig Wright.

This will be among Borthwick's most pressing priorities. As good as George and Cowan-Dickie have been over the past decade, banking on them to be at their absolute best at the World Cup seems risky. And yet they remain heavily relied upon, with Dan's senior opportunities drying up drastically. Third hookers do not tend to see much action at World Cups, but there is scope for at least one player to smash down Borthwick's door in this position. Set-piece solidity will be key.

TIGHT-HEAD PROP
Senior game time in 2025-26 Joe Heyes, Will Stuart, Trevor Davison, Opoku-Fordjour, George Kloska.
England A game time in 2025-26 Afolabi Fasogbon, Billy Sela, Kloska.

Heyes took Stuart's selection for the British & Irish Lions tour as a cue to become England's premier tight-head prop. Such progress was particularly useful after Stuart ruptured an achilles before the Six Nations. Should the Bath man find his way back to pre-injury form, England will be in a strong spot. Either way, the promising Kloska is in a cluster with Opoku-Fordjour and Davison. Fasogbon and Sela, both aged 21, possess enormous potential as well.

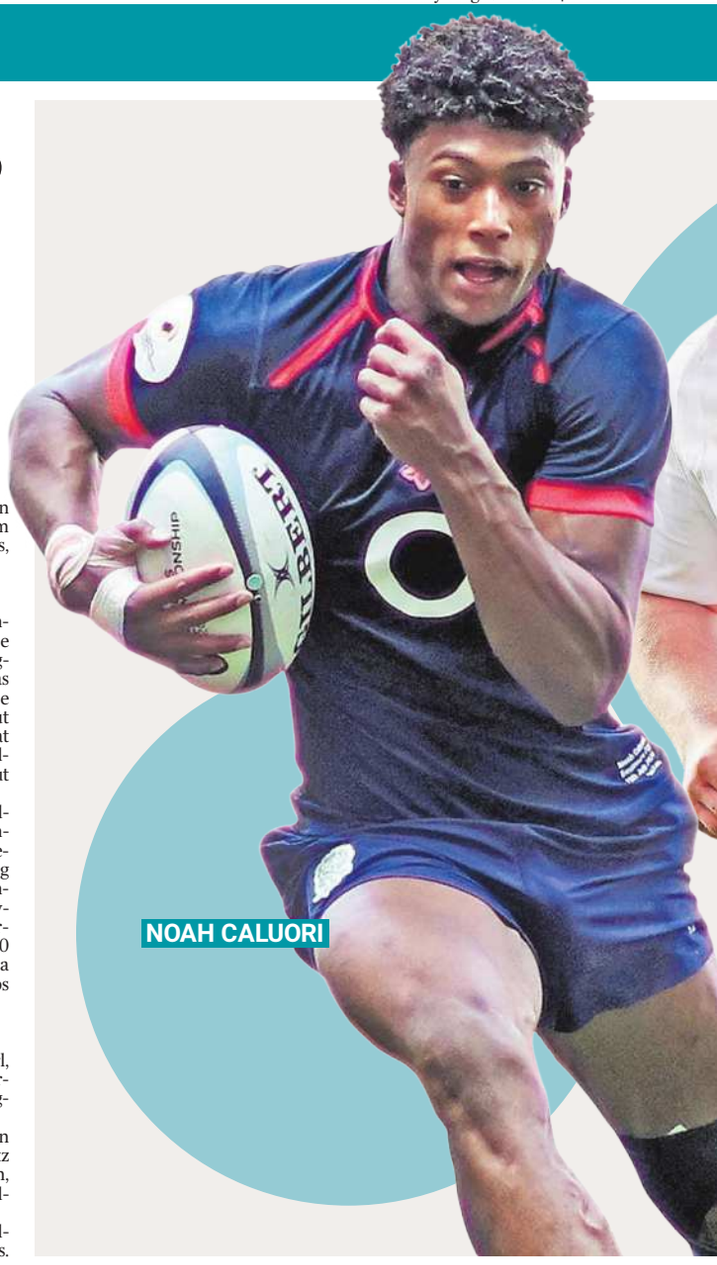
LOCK
Senior game time in 2025-2026 Alex Coles, Ollie Chessum, Maro Itoje, George Martin, Charlie Ewels.
England A game time in 2025-26 Ben Bamber, Joe Batley, Hugh Tizard, Tom Lockett, Olamide Sodeke, Ewels, Martin, Nick Isiekwe.
Other contenders Arthur Clark.

Even without the prospect of a refreshed Itoje coming back before the autumn, this looks to be an encouraging area for England. This summer has underlined how much is added by the menace and heft of Martin. Coles put together his most convincing season at Test level too. Borthwick may be mulling over a couple of questions about the make-up of his back five.

Is Chessum going to stay at blind-side flanker or could Chandler Cunningham-South or Ted Hill fulfil line-out roles while adding more carrying power if Chessum returned to the engine room? Courtney Lawes is a ready-made option. Furthermore, with Martin tending not to last into the final 20 minutes, would it be worth grooming a designated tight-head lock, perhaps Clark, to deputise?

BACK ROW
Senior game time in 2025-26 Ben Earl, Guy Pepper, Henry Pollock, Tom Curry, Sam Underhill, Chandler Cunningham-South, Chessum.
England A game time in 2025-26 Ethan Roots, Tom Pearson, Greg Fisilau, Fitz Harding, Nathan Michelow, Joe Owen, Ewan Richards, Jack Kenningham, Alex Dombrandt, Ted Hill, Tom Curry.
Other contenders Ben Curry, Emeka Ilione, Hoskins Sotutu, Courtney Lawes.

Covering three positions makes this section complex, even before considering Borthwick's pivot from a relatively lightweight trio — Pepper, Underhill and Earl, for example — to posting Chessum at blind-side flanker. Assuming England persevere with a bigger man at No 6, they also have Cunningham-South, Hill and Lawes in the frame. Roots, Michelow, Owen and Richards appeared for the A team too. Just as significant as Chessum's switch from lock was how Pepper moved from blind-side to open-side flanker, where he was charged with whacking rucks to maintain continuity. Tom Curry shifted in a similar direction. His twin brother, Ben, has become something of a for-



MUTV on sky
TICKET
ADMIT 1
ATLÉTICO DE MADRID SAT 1 AUGUST
Snapdragon Cup
TOUR
PRESENTED BY Snapdragon
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN SAT 8 AUGUST
LEEDS UNITED WED 12 AUGUST
AC MILAN SAT 15 AUGUST
Men's and Women's fixtures. Exclusive behind-the-scenes access. Original documentaries.
£7
extra a month
sky
Search sky.com/MUTV
Existing Sky TV customers only. £7 extra a month on a 31-day rolling subscription. Cancel anytime. 31 days' notice required to cancel.

gotten man and, fitness permitting, will be in the mix with Sam Underhill in the autumn. Pearson fits the mould of a brawnier No 7 as well.

Speed, acceleration and relentless industry are the chief assets of Earl and Pollock, who should be balanced by size, stopping power and lineout jumping elsewhere. Fisilau has a similar profile, although could be seen as an open-side flanker. Sotutu, meanwhile, is a more classical No 8 who stands 6ft 4in. With his blockbuster cameos, Pollock has earned the right for Borthwick to start him in a complementary combination. As ever, England will monitor tactical trends; particularly whether jackalling is being rewarded.

SCRUM HALF

Senior game time in 2025-26 Alex Mitchell, Jack van Poortvliet, Ben Spencer.

England A game time in 2025-26 Will Porter, Raffi Quirke, Caolan Englefield, Archie McParland, Harry Randall.

A nasty injury for McParland in the Gallagher Prem final clearly altered Borthwick's summer plans. Spencer ended up touring after suggestions that he might be given a rest, yet played in Argentina only as a second-half replacement after Mitchell re-strained a hamstring in Liverpool. Meanwhile, Van Poortvliet did well enough with his three consecutive starts, notwithstanding his yellow card against Argentina, to push towards World Cup selection. A fit and firing Mitchell will compete hard for the frontline berth and Spencer will not fade away, but the most intriguing aspects of the next year will be how many chances are handed to McParland.

FLY HALF

Senior game time in 2025-26 George Ford, Fin Smith, Marcus Smith.

England A game time in 2025-26 Charlie Atkinson, Billy Searle, Ford.

Charlie Atkinson's fine season for Gloucester was heartening and Searle orchestrated the 52-14 defeat of Ireland A beautifully. Before that, the pool of potential fly halves had looked shallow. Fin Smith steadily assumed more control after replacing Ford midway through the Six Nations. The 24-year-old is developing well. Marcus Smith has not started at fly half for England since round one of the Six Nations. Watch out for George Furbank or Henry Slade seeing stints at fly half over the next 18 months. These contingencies would help England stay with a six-two bench and could shape the make-up of the World Cup squad. Then again, a five-three bench may prove the best way to pack in more game-breakers.

CENTRE

Senior game time in 2025-26 Fraser Dingwall, Ollie Lawrence, Max Ojomoh, Henry Slade, Tommy Freeman, Seb Atkinson, Benhard Janse van Rensburg, Earl.

England A game time in 2025-26 Ojomoh, Rekeiti Ma'asi-White, Angus Hall, Joe Woodward, Seb Atkinson, Orlando Bailey, Luke Northmore.

Other contenders Joe Marchant.

This is another section with multiple moving parts. Over the course of a single campaign in Borthwick's midfield, Dingwall and Lawrence beat the All Blacks before Ojomoh announced himself with a stellar display against Argentina. Project Freeman was aired and then halted. Janse van Rensburg became eligible and was capped immediately. Seb Atkinson enjoyed an understated yet tidy summer dovetailing with Fin Smith, his mate from the Worcester Warriors academy, and Slade reinforced his worth. Where next, then?

Well, Marchant is bound to come into the World Cup equation. There was a flash of Janse van Rensburg playing alongside Freeman at the end of the win against Fiji, which will be reprised at some point. England A fixtures have allowed Borthwick to assess potential wild cards such as Ma'asi-White and Hall.

BACK THREE

Senior game time in 2025-26 Immanuel Feyi-Waboso, Tom Roebuck, Freddie Steward, Henry Arundell, Cadan Murley, Elliot Daly, Noah Caluori, Slade.

England A game time in 2025-26 Ollie Hassell-Collins, George Hendy, Josh Hodge, Ben Redshaw, Adam Radwan, Murley.

Other contenders Ollie Sleightholme, George Furbank.

Feyi-Waboso and Freeman underlined their status as England's frontline wings in Argentina. There is evidently a desired foil for those two, but Furbank's body is not co-operating. Steward, Daly and Marcus Smith have been the fallback full backs, with Slade also used. A distributor in that position to aid the midfield would appear the preference.

Caluori's prodigious spring gives him an X-factor aerial threat, and two caps last month will foreshadow more when the teenager recovers from wrist surgery. Roebuck, like Lawrence, seemed to slip down the pecking order. Murley started in South Africa to prolong Freeman's stay at centre.

Borthwick lavished praise on the rapid Radwan towards the end of last season before going in a different direction. England could not bring Arundell into games enough during the Six Nations. Sleightholme, who has scored six tries in eight Tests, and Hendy have the advantage of Northampton Saints cohesion.

English racer loses medal and misses wedding after rerun

Ellis Kottas won silver in crash-affected race, but was fourth in rerun and missed aunt's big day. By **Rick Broadbent**

Ellis Kottas will never forget Glasgow. The Sevenoaks student thought she had won a bronze medal in the T54 1,500m wheelchair final on Wednesday. That was upgraded to silver after a rival was disqualified, but a day later she was told there would be a controversial rerun due to a first-lap pile-up. And so, 40 hours after her apparent career high, she finished fourth and missed out on both a medal and her aunt's wedding in Belgium.

Mel Woods, the Scot who grew up by the Scotstoun Stadium, repeated her win from Wednesday and set a Games record of 3min 32.2sec. Noemi Alphonse, of Mauritius, and Eliza Ault-Connell, of Australia, took the other medals. Team Mauritius and Australia were no doubt very happy with that outcome as they had forced the restaging, having lodged appeals after a crash caused by Canada's Nandini Sharma.

The upshot was that two women who were disappointed on Wednesday were delighted yesterday, and Kottas was the unluckiest woman at the Commonwealth Games. "It's been very tough but Team England has been very supportive," she said, fighting back tears. "My mum had to go home because we had a wedding in Belgium, which I'll be missing.

"I've not got enough time to get there. It's my aunt's wedding and I was actually going to be the ringbearer, but she's very happy for me to be here."

Kottas, 22, said she could not comment on whether the race should have been rerun but there was deep frustration in the England team that the organisers waited until the following day to announce details of the second helping. However, she also said there would have been a hollow feeling if she had gone home with Wednesday's silver medal.

"With half the field wiped out, it wouldn't have been won on my own merit," the Kingston University student said. "It's very mixed emotions, but today they outraced me. It's definitely been crazy."

Woods, meanwhile, was able to revel in the novelty of being a champion twice in three days. "Not many people get two laps of honour," the 31-year-old said. "I definitely milked that today and am just appreciative to still have friends and family in the crowd.

Kottas fought back tears after finishing fourth in the rerun

"I thought it was going to be a very different experience this morning, but I was able to have that excitement and happiness I had the other night. To do it twice around — I'll take that as a once in a lifetime."

Woods said she was not sure if her mother, who broke her hip a few weeks ago, had made it to the rerun. "I didn't spot her but, with a broken hip, I'm not sure she'd have been jumping up and down — I think she'd have been watching with one eye closed with nerves," she said.

She had plenty of sympathy for Kottas and Sharma, the Canadian deemed guilty of causing Wednesday's pile-up. "It's a grey area and that makes it a hard decision to make and someone falls on the wrong side of the fence. That's racing. Life isn't fair."

The athletics programme reaches a crescendo tonight with a loaded men's mile. Josh Kerr, dubbed the "best ever" on a huge banner on a city-centre building, is the star turn but he has serious rivals. Kerr is the new world-record holder, after clocking 3min 42.66sec to break Hicham El Guerrouj's 27-year-old mark in London a fortnight ago, but Jake Wightman, his old Edinburgh AC team-mate and another former 1,500m world champion, is in improving form.

And then there is Cameron Myers, the 20-year-old Australian who seems likely to leave a seismic mark on middle-distance running.

"I got beaten by him in 2024 in Australia, and when I saw him I was like, 'He's going to be good,'" Wightman said. "He just keeps getting better and better every year. He's the future of the sport and we're the hangers-on. You're potentially racing against someone who's going to be the best of all time."

Classy Hunter Bell wins first major outdoor gold

Rick Broadbent

It was only two years ago in Glasgow that England's Georgia Hunter Bell decided to change her life. She raced for Great Britain at the World Indoor Championships, finished fourth, and reasoned that her future lay on the track rather than in cyber security tech sales. She returned last night to win her sixth senior medal since that career change and is now the Commonwealth Games 800m champion. Good choice.

She has been averaging a medal every four months, in Olympic, world and European championships, indoors and out. She is making up for lost time, but for all her late-blooming success, she had still been looking for her first outdoor gold medal as she took to the blue Scotstoun track. This was never going to be an easy fix as she faced Lilian Odira, the Kenyan who had sprung one of the biggest surprises of last year's World Championships when she finished ahead of Hunter Bell, who in turn had raised eyebrows by pipping her friend and training partner Keely Hodgkinson, to silver. It is often a game of fine margins at the top, but not last night.

Hunter Bell, 32, dominated this race with elan. She went to the front very early but was clearly confident in her finish. She strung out the field and then turned on the afterburners with 200 metres to go – and then, again, off the last bend. She was an easy winner in 1min 59.51sec, with Odira more than a second behind. Australia's Sarah Billings took the bronze.

Hunter Bell was in tears on the podium and explained why afterwards. "I was thinking of the young woman version of myself who was 23, who gave up and really didn't know what she was doing with her life," she said. "I feel sorry for that girl and proud of making it through that and coming back here.

"Glasgow's very special for me because it was at those indoor championships where I decided to quit my job. I came fourth there and that was the perfect result for me because it showed me I was good, but if I really wanted to break through and be the best in the world I had to make a lifestyle change. It's been insane, it's been amazing."

Her story has become well known in track circles. She was a talented junior who reasoned that if she had not made it by 23 she never would, and so she got a serious job before lockdown parkruns rekindled a passion. In 2024, when she got serious again under her old coach Trevor Painter and his wife Jenny Meadows, she took 13 seconds off her 1,500m personal best, the sort of leap to cause nods and winks if you did not know about the back story and the long hiatus. Now she is the tenth-fastest of all time over 800m, and 11th over 1,500m.

There was a time when clocking 1:55 for two laps would have provided pause for national celebration. She did that in June, but was only the fifth-fastest woman of the month, under-

Hunter Bell took home the gold, right,

Two nights from £959pp*

Times Holidays exclusive package

Six Nations: Wales vs England 2027

March 5, 2027

Be there for Wales v England at the Principality Stadium, a Guinness Men's Six Nations fixture where history, rivalry and campaign-defining pressure meet.

This exclusive package includes official match tickets and two hosted events with commenter legend Stuart Barnes, The Times's Charlie Morgan and a celebrity guest speaker, for an experience that goes beyond kick-off. With a prime city-centre four-star hotel, you'll also remain close to the stadium, restaurants and post-match debate. Insight before the whistle, atmosphere after it — and every detail handled from start to finish.

Hosted by Stuart Barnes

Since hanging up his fly-half boots, Stuart is a columnist and match analyst for The Times and one of the country's most incisive commentators on rugby.

Price includes

- Two nights' four-star stay at Future Inn Cardiff Bay with breakfast
- Pre-match Q&A with commentator legend Stuart Barnes, The Times's senior rugby writer Charlie Morgan and a celebrity guest
- Captain's Run access on Friday
- Official Cat A ticket (lower tier, try line area)
- Hosted welcome drinks
- Tour merchandise

Optional upgrade:

- Silver Hospitality upgrade for drinks and lunch

WRU Gullivers sports travel OFFICIAL SUPPORTER TRAVEL PARTNER

Call 0808 291 4831 or visit thetimes.com/th-sixnations2027

TIMES Holidays

Terms and conditions apply. *Price shown is per person and based on two adults sharing. Single supplement of £360pp applies. Price correct as of July 17, 2026 and subject to change and availability. Price includes all non-optional taxes/fees/charges known at time of publication. This holiday is sold by Times Holidays as an agent for Gullivers Sports Travel and protected under ABTA V832. For full booking conditions, visit thetimes.com/holidays/terms-and-conditions. Guest speakers, hosts, featured talent and itinerary events are subject to confirmation, availability and change, and may be substituted, rescheduled or withdrawn. No refunds or compensation will be issued for changes to the speaker or talent lineup, although this does not affect any statutory rights that cannot lawfully be excluded.

ABTA Travel with confidence ABTA No.P8770

Australia's richest

Craig Lord

The Great Britain swimming team reassembles this weekend before the European Championships in Paris, which begin a week on Monday, still reeling from an Australian rout at the Commonwealth Games.

Athletes from England, Scotland, Wales and Jersey celebrated just four golds, and 32 medals in total, in the pool. Australia, whose six podium sweeps alone equated to more than half the home nations' total, won 31 of the 42 gold medals and 60 of the 126 medals on offer to Olympic-programme swimmers.

It represents a brutal collapse in British performances at Commonwealth level, below the low-tide mark of 1998 when results raised a red flag on the way to Britain's crisis point at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.

Team GB swimmers returned home 26 years ago with no medals in the Olympic pool for the first time since 1936. As a result, the Australian Bill Sweetenham was brought in to revolutionise Britain's performance programme. His work had a rapid and profound effect, and at the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester home-nation swimmers improved their medal return. That trend continued under the leadership of Rebecca Adlington's coach, Bill Furniss.

But since the high point of Glasgow 2014, the returns have been in steady decline. Glasgow 2026 represents an even bigger drop.

For the new GB head coach, Steven Tigg, who took over in late 2024, Paris will be a critical test of whether Glasgow 2026 is a blip at the midpoint of the Olympic cycle, or deep-seated performance issues that need addressing.

Paris will be an even tougher test for British swimmers in many events, with the best of Germany, Italy, Hungary and a wave of Olympic champions from other nations at least matching the magnitude of the challenge brought by Australia.

When Tigg, mentor to Duncan Scott and many other internationals at Stirling, took over from Furniss, he said: "We want to be regarded as one of the nations punching above our weight and

JANE BARLOW/PA

after dominating the 800m from start to finish in Glasgow, main, beating world champion Odira in a time of 1min 59.51sec

scoring just how far and fast the event has travelled this year. To put that in context, Kelly Holmes, a double Olympic champion at the middle distances, never got below 1:56.

Hunter Bell benefits from being in the same M11 training camp as Hodgkinson, the undisputed crossover star of British athletics, Josh Kerr's mile record notwithstanding. It helps to see someone as gifted as Hodgkinson up close as she tries to push parameters, but it means her profile is often partly in the shadows. So her 1,500m Olympic bronze in 2024 naturally played second fiddle to Hodgkinson's 800m gold, but things have slowly started to level up. Last year, as Hodgkinson battled back from injury, Hunter Bell beat her to silver over 800m at those World Championships. Both then won world indoor titles in Poland in March, Hodgkinson in the 800m and Hunter Bell at 1,500m.

Hunter Bell has been seen primarily as a 1,500m runner, and will compete in that event at the forthcoming European Championships, but you wonder how long that can remain the case when she is taking down people like Odira. You also wonder if she and Hodgkinson can remain happy partners if they continue to compete against each other over two laps. She believes so.

"We're always going to be friends," she said. "She FaceTimed me today just to walk through the plan and give her two cents. We're friends and then we're competitors when we step on the line. I really don't think that's weird. It's very obvious when you line up that you want to win and we're blessed that we get along — and we can make each other faster."

There were more medals for England in the 400m hurdles. Emily Newnham finished brilliantly but left herself with just too much to do and had to settle for silver behind Jamaica's Sanique Walker. Jake Minshull then repeated that result, as he finished runner-up to Nigeria's Ezekiel Nathaniel.

In the final race of the night, the sport's new sprint sensation, Adaejah Hodge, clocked 22.07 to take gold in the 200m final. It was a big night for her, the British Virgin Islands and the chequered history of the world's fastest women. Make no mistake, Hodge, 20, is extraordinary. She also came back from a 17-month doping suspension this year, although the Athletics Integrity Unit agreed that she had unintentionally and unknowingly ingested a banned metabolic modulator.

person has left GB playing catch-up

British and Australian medal share in swimming at Commonwealth Games

	British (gold only)	Australia (gold only)	British (all medals)	Australia (all medals)
1998	15.6%	78.1%	24%	51%
2002	28.9%	65.8%	32.5%	40.4%
2014	36.8%	42.1%	35.1%	41.2%
2022	20%	47.5%	29.2%	40.8%
2026	9.5%	76.2%	25.4%	47.6%

being one of the world's leading swimming nations."

That meant continuing to do it "our way". He explained: "It's important to remember that the things they have in different countries can't be replicated [in the UK]. The British way is [still] really important, because we do have to respect our own society, climate, environment and identify what is going to work for us."

The established stars of the British team back that up. They are Britain-based, including the Olympic champions Adam Ramsay-Peaty, Tom Dean, Scott, James Guy and Matt Richards. The latest prime example is Angharad Evans, the two-times breaststroke champion for Scotland in Glasgow who opted for Stirling after returning from college in the US, saying that the system there did not suit her. Back home, she has thrived.

Among other green shoots were 18-year-old Filip Nowacki, who outdid Ramsay-Peaty on medal count with gold in the 200m and silver in the 100m breaststroke ahead of the GB captain. Another excellent prospect to make her senior debut this week was the 16-year-old Amalie Smith, with silver in the 400m medley and bronze in the 200m.

Paris awaits, and Tigg insists that is Britain's priority event. In that regard, it will be the better measure of how the national team are faring ahead of LA 2028. Even so, the Commonwealth Games gives us a unique glimpse of the depth in the programme. And as things stand, Great Britain have just been thumped by Australia.

The advantages of a "swimming paradise" are real, including more Olympic pools in the Brisbane area than the whole of Britain, a long tradition of being at the cutting edge of advances in the sport, and waves of Olympic champions and world record-breakers setting high-bar standards.

There's this too: in a sport infamous for its heavy workloads and poverty of financial rewards, it helps in Australia to have a billionaire funding your swimmers. The head of Hancock Prospecting, Gina Rinehart, has an estimated net worth of about A$40 billion (£21 billion), making her Australia's richest person. When sports organisations said they would rather not have her opinion, just her money, she simply decided to fund the athletes directly instead.

In Glasgow that meant A$20,000 for gold, A$15,000 for silver, A$5,000 for bronze and the same again for each member of a quartet that won gold. The bill comes to just over A$1 million, with the top ten earners being paid between A$50,000 and A$80,000 each. No fewer than 30 will get at least A$10,000.

There are said to be more than 50 billionaires in Britain. Do any of them like swimmers?

Rinehart is paying big bonuses to Australia's medal winners in the pool in Glasgow

Hull shakes off criticism to remain in contention

AIG Women's Open

Cathy Harris

Charley Hull was unfazed by the fierce backlash to a prank she played on her caddie as she recorded an even-par 71 to remain firmly in contention at the halfway stage of the AIG Women's Open, only five shots off the lead.

The 30-year-old has been subjected to a deluge of deeply unpleasant online comments this week in response to a video in which she used a fake scratchcard to trick her caddie, Adam Woodward, into believing he had won £100,000.

After finishing her second round two under par at Royal Lytham & St Annes, Hull said people did not understand the relationship she had with Woodward. "We're very, very close," she said. "He's like a big brother to me and one of my best friends. He thought the joke was brilliant. I wouldn't do it to a random person who didn't know me. The amount of pranks the caddies play on each other are just way worse than that.

"People need to chill about it. Adam is loving the attention too. People need to stop writing stuff like that and lighten up."

If there is one player most fans would like to see capture a maiden major title it is Hull, who attracts huge crowds on the course and has a massive fan base. In a game where so many players are robotic and bland she is box office. She is exactly what the women's game needs to broaden its popularity and in addressing the issue immediately after her round she displayed inner strength and disarming honesty.

The world No 7 admitted that by putting herself in the limelight she would be silly to think there would not be nasty comments directed at her. She added: "I'm in such a good position in life and there are others far worse off, so I can't really moan about what people are saying."

Hull alluded to her Polish grandmother, who was a teenager in the Polish resistance during the Second World War and later escaped from a Russian PoW camp before trekking across Siberia to freedom. "She was ruthless and super thick-skinned," Hull said. "We've got it too easy nowadays."

South Korea's Haeran Ryu still holds the outright lead after her second round of 69 left her at seven under, one shot ahead of Japan's Shiho Kuwaki.

Ryu, 25, is in the form of her life and in prime position to capture a third successive major in six weeks. Her compatriot Inbee Park is the only player in the modern era to win three consecutive majors, achieving the feat in 2013.

"I'm in a better place going in to the weekend than last year," said Hull, who finished in a tie for second 12 months ago and is still searching for an elusive major title after being a runner-up five times. She was joined on two under by Lottie Woad, who also posted a level-par 71 to maintain her excellent form.

Mimi Rhodes, who made headlines in the final round at Royal Porthcawl last year when she made a hole in one when her ball deflected off her playing partner's, is at one under and in a strong position to catch the of Europe's Solheim Cup captain, Anna Nordqvist, before Monday's team announcement.

Georgia Hall, the 2018 champion, was among the big names to miss the cut alongside the multiple major winners Minjee Lee, In-gee Chun and Jiyai Shin.

Soldier's Tree can tower over opposition in Stewards' Cup

Rob Wright
Racing Editor

Soldier's Tree is the least exposed runner in the Coral Stewards' Cup (3.35) and, having quickly developed into a classy performer, he is fancied to defy top weight at Goodwood today.

Formerly trained in Ireland, he has improved markedly since switching to the yard of James Owen this spring, showing smart form on all three runs for his new stable. He was beaten just a length when third to Double Rush in the Wokingham at Royal Ascot in June and then shaped better than the result suggests when third in group three company at Newbury last time, racing too keenly for his own good early on in a small field where he struggled to find cover in the first two furlongs.

A strongly run race looks assured here, which will be ideal for Soldier's Tree as he has a high cruising speed.

He carries top weight here, but capable apprentice Mason Paetel takes a handy 5lb off his back and Soldier's Tree remains open to plenty of improvement after just six career starts. He looks sure to go well.

Last year's winner, Two Tribes, rates the main threat. He returned to form when second over an extra furlong in the International at Ascot last time and Richard Spencer, his shrewd trainer, has proved a dab hand at preparing his runners for the top sprint handicaps in recent years.

The opening Highclere Castle Gin Summer Handicap (1.50) can go to **Valedictory**. He has improved on his past two starts, proving well suited by the combination of this trip and the fitting of cheekpieces. He had to work hard to prevail at Newmarket last time, but that can be put down to a pedestrian early gallop, which did not play to his strengths, and he had previously scored in good style over this course and distance. He remains open to further progress and can complete a treble.

The Coral Glorious Stakes (2.25) can go to **In My Teens**. This filly struggled over hurdles last winter, but has looked a different horse back on the Flat and she relished a first try at this trip when storming to a seven-length success in a valuable handicap at the Curragh. She is well worth her place at this level.

Marengo Storm can spring a surprise in the Phase Eight Handicap (4.10). He took a while to knuckle down at Newmarket last time, but that was a messy three-runner race and he was well on top at the finish.

The fitting of cheekpieces for the first time here should help and he can take another step forward.

ROB WRIGHT'S WEEKEND GUIDE

Big-race trends
Coral Stewards' Cup
(3.35 Goodwood)
The past two winners, Get It and Two Tribes, bid to become just the second since 1968 to land this twice. A high draw usually helps, with just two of the past ten victors coming from a single-figure stall

Banker or bust?
Campeona
(6.15 Lingfield Park)
Stayed on strongly to win on her first try at this two-mile trip at Newbury and the handicapper looks to have been lenient in raising her just 4lb. She ought to be too good for some exposed rivals. BANKER

Red-hot trainer
Roger Varian
The Newmarket handler has saddled ten winners from 28 runners in the past fortnight. He has seven entries today, spread across five different tracks

Repeat performance?
Al Aasy
(2.25 Goodwood)
Landed this in tidy fashion 12 months ago and, although now a nine-year-old, retains plenty of ability. Faces some progressive younger rivals this time, though, and could just come up short

What's in a name
Howzatt
(4.45 Goodwood)
In the week that "Clicky Ponting" has hit the headlines, this colt would be a timely winner on his debut. His dam, Whazzat, was a useful performer and he could go well for his in-form yard

Bet of the day
Soldier's Tree
(3.35 Newmarket)
This progressive sprinter has had just six starts in his career and ran a cracker when third in the Wokingham at Royal Ascot. He has the class to defy top weight

Goodwood
Rob Wright

1.50 Valedictory (nb)
2.25 In My Teens
3.00 Waardah
3.35 Soldier's Tree (nap)
4.10 Marengo Storm
4.45 Charted Course
5.20 Spell Master

Going: good to firm-good in places
Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best
Racing TV

1.50 Highclere Castle Gin Summer Handicap (£61,848: 1m 6f) (14 runners) ITV

1	(12)	10-305	**TARRIANCE** 78 (D) A Balding 4-9-12	C T Keane	97
2	(10)	4-1261	**ALIGN THE STARS** 35 (P,CD) C Johnston 5-9-8	D Muscutt	98
3	(7)	203006	**BURDETT ROAD** 28 James Owen 6-9-8	M Paetel (5)	99
4	(9)	220-36	**HOPEWELL ROCK** 43 (BF) G Boughey 4-9-8	R L Moore	♦103
5	(3)	55-200	**STRESSFREE** 46 D O'Meara 6-9-6	T Marquand	100
6	(13)	-00004	**NESTHORN** 21 G Baker 4-9-4	B Sayette	94
7	(5)	30-364	**AERONAUTIC** 46 (T) J P O'Brien (Ire) 5-9-4	D Browne McMonagle	95
8	(14)	24-400	**NIGHTIME DANCER** 21 (B) R Hannon 4-9-4	S M Levey	94
9	(4)	01-325	**SING US A SONG** 46 (C,D) R Beckett 4-9-4	James Doyle	96
10	(6)	1-2611	**VALEDICTORY** 22 (P,CD) J & T Gosden 4-9-2	W Buick	95
11	(1)	0-0451	**TOO SOON** 56 (P) G & J Moore 4-9-1	W Fentiman (3)	94
12	(8)	651050	**BAHADUR** 14 (C,D) S Woods 4-9-0	D Egan	94
13	(11)	1100-6	**SMALL FRY** 46 (D) J P O'Brien (Ire) 5-8-13	O Murphy	90
14	(2)	0-2305	**INCENSED** 22 A Perrett 5-8-12	K Shoemark	94

4-1 Valedictory, 6-1 Sing Us A Song, 13-2 Aeronautic, 7-1 Small Fry, Hopewell Rock, 8-1 Align The Stars, 10-1 Tarriance, 14-1 Nightime Dancer, Too Soon.

Rob Wright's choice: Valedictory has won both starts since stepped up to this trip and fitted with cheekpieces **Dangers**: Sing Us A Song, Aeronautic

2.25 Coral Glorious Stakes (Group 3: £62,381: 1m 4f) (8) ITV

1	(8)	150-21	**AL AASY** 28 (CD) W Haggas 9-9-3	T Marquand	♦114
2	(2)	543-30	**ENFJAAR** 46 (H) R Varian 6-9-3	R Dawson	111
3	(4)	/463-0	**GHOSTWRITER** 46 K P De Foy 5-9-3	D Egan	97
4	(6)	013463	**INVOLVEMENT** 28 S & E Crisford 5-9-3	W Buick	111
5	(3)	2-2006	**KING'S GAMBIT** 28 Harry Charlton 5-9-3	J P Spencer	107
6	(7)	4-6044	**MIDAK** 14 (H) I Williams 4-9-3	K Shoemark	102
7	(1)	40-311	**OPPORTUNITY** 43 (D) W Haggas 4-9-3	J Doyle	110
8	(5)	122-01	**IN MY TEENS** 34 (H,D) G Cromwell (Ire) 4-9-0	O Murphy	111

13-8 Al Aasy, 3-1 Opportunity, 5-1 Ghostwriter, 8-1 King's Gambit, 10-1 Enfjaar, In My Teens, 20-1 Involvement, 33-1 Midak.

Wright choice: In My Teens won a valuable handicap by seven lengths at the Curragh, storming clear late on **Dangers**: Al Aasy, Opportunity

3.00 Qatar Lillie Langtry Stakes (Fillies & Mares') (Group 2: £170,130: 1m 6f) (7) ITV

1	(4)	12-120	**SANTORINI STAR** 42 (C) W Haggas 5-9-12	T Marquand	112
2	(3)	1221-0	**CONSENT** 72 (D) Sir M Prescott 4-9-9	L Morris	78
3	(2)	2451-1	**DANIELLE** 70 (D) J & T Gosden 5-9-9	W Buick	♦114
4	(1)	132-02	**GOODIE TWO SHOES** 24 (T,D) J P O'Brien (Ire) 7-9-9	D Browne McMonagle	103
5	(7)	540-54	**LITTLE DORRIT** 14 R Varian 4-9-9	R Dawson	95
6	(6)	4110-2	**WAARDAH** 63 (CD) Owen Burrows 4-9-9	C Rodriguez	112
7	(5)	41-165	**AMELIA EARHART** 14 (P) A P O'Brien (Ire) 3-8-13	R L Moore	105

5-2 Waardah, 4-1 Danielle, Santorini Star, 9-2 Consent, 15-2 Goodie Two Shoes, 10-1 Amelia Earhart, 14-1 Little Dorrit.

Wright choice: Waardah has had just one try at this trip, when winning this race 12 months ago; she can build on a recent run **Danger**: Consent

3.35 Coral Stewards' Cup (Heritage Handicap) (£128,850: 6f) (28) ITV

1	(20)	-12333	**SOLDIER'S TREE** 14 (BF) James Owen 5-9-12	M Paetel (5)	♦108
2	(2)	001201	**DUBAI BLING** 21 (P,D) H Palmer 4-9-11(6ex)	W Buick	104
3	(9)	-11001	**NORTHERN CHAMPION** 21 (D) E Walker 3-9-9(6ex)	Ashley Lewis (5)	107
4	(25)	/2-052	**MITBAAHY** 14 (T,D) C Hills 7-9-8	J P Spencer	106
5	(17)	024-53	**WEST ACRE** 183 (B) G Scott 4-9-8	D Keenan	80
6	(21)	3-0101	**SONDAD** 14 (V,D) M & D Easterby 5-9-8(6ex)	Joanna Mason	105
7	(24)	120040	**RUN BOY RUN** 4 (V,D) R Spencer 5-9-7	G Wood	102
8	(13)	200002	**TWO TRIBES** 7 (B,CD) R Spencer 5-9-6	D Egan	100
9	(27)	11060-	**GET IT** 314 (CD) G Baker 8-9-6	P Cosgrave	--
10	(11)	110020	**COMPLETELY RANDOM** 7 (P,D) Harry Charlton 5-9-6	R L Moore	103
11	(28)	3321/2	**GARFIELD SHADOW** 25 (D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 5-9-5	H Vigors (5)	92
12	(15)	50-161	**TUCO SALAMANCA** 35 (T,D) Ollie Sangster 4-9-5	D Browne McMonagle	87
13	(5)	2P2031	**STRATUSNINE** 7 (D) H Palmer 4-9-5(6ex)	D Probert	99
14	(6)	060030	**ANNAF** 21 (D) M Appleby 7-9-4	D Muscutt	100
15	(3)	5-3020	**INVICTUS GOLD** 33 (P,D) Tom Clover 4-9-4	J Watson	100
16	(22)	631043	**FANDOM** 21 (D) R Hannon 5-9-3	S M Levey	99
17	(23)	01-114	**FAR ABOVE DREAM** 42 (CD) James Owen 4-9-3	K Shoemark	99
18	(16)	056-00	**HAMMER THE HAMMER** 42 (D) K Ryan 4-9-3	T Moore (7)	96
19	(18)	10-010	**REALIGN** 42 (P,D) W Haggas 4-9-2	T Marquand	98
20	(14)	310-60	**FLASH HARRY** 42 (CD) C Cox 4-9-2	J Nicholls (3)	79
21	(19)	4-0340	**BERKSHIRE WHISPER** 77 (D) A Balding 4-9-1	O Murphy	96
22	(1)	416-00	**CANDY** 4 (D) R Spencer 4-9-1	C Hutchinson	--
23	(12)	426562	**FERROUS** 15 (C,D) J Channon 6-9-1	C Rodriguez	100
24	(7)	-25100	**KING OF LIGHT** 7 (D) S C Williams 4-9-1(6ex)	M Ghiani	99
25	(8)	010212	**DARK THIRTY** 14 (D) J & S Quinn 6-9-0	J Hart	102
26	(10)	10-120	**EVENING SAIGON** 42 (P,D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-0	J Doyle	98
27	(4)	0-1115	**GOLD STAR HERO** 56 (P,D) M Bell 4-9-0	H Crouch	92
28	(26)	031604	**TOCA MADERA** 4 (D) D O'Meara 5-9-0	S Osborne	93

6-1 Far Above Dream, 8-1 Two Tribes, 10-1 Tuco Salamanca, Soldier's Tree, Sondad, Dubai Bling, 12-1 Evening Saigon, 14-1 Annaf, Stratusnine, Mitbaahy, Dark Thirty.

Wright choice: Soldier's Tree has shaped well on all three starts since joining the James Owen yard **Dangers**: Two Tribes, Mitbaahy

4.10 Phase Eight Handicap (3-Y-O: £38,655: 7f) (13) ITV

1	(7)	1232-6	**WILD DESERT** 23 (D) C Appleby 9-9	W Buick	85
2	(6)	2-1600	**AQPAN** 70 (D) R Varian 9-3	R Dawson	♦98
3	(2)	21-610	**WE'RE GOOSERS** 44 (BF,D) H Palmer 8-13	O Murphy	85
4	(11)	146051	**UTMOST GOOD FAITH** 31 (B,T,D) S C Williams 8-11	J Hart	93
5	(4)	-10006	**GHOST MODE** 23 (D) A Balding 8-11	R Hornby	91
6	(5)	40-061	**EGOLI** 14 (P,D) R Beckett 8-7	D Egan	90
7	(8)	3-3011	**NAVAL LIGHT** 17 (D) K R Burke 8-6	J Nicholls (3)	88
8	(10)	1-5531	**IRONWILL** 28 (D) S C Williams 8-5	M Ghiani	87
9	(13)	21-352	**PROUD NATION** 28 (D) R & P Fahey 8-5	W Fentiman (3)	88
10	(12)	-31120	**STARTLED** 49 (D) R Hughes 8-5	H Vigors (5)	85
11	(1)	5121	**MARENGO STORM** 36 (P,D) R Hughes 8-2	L Morris	84
12	(3)	005114	**START ME UP** 21 (P,D) R Spencer 8-2	S Osborne	84
13	(9)	210001	**AY UP DUCK** 9 (D) M Appleby 8-2	N Currie	78

7-2 We're Goosers, 6-1 Ghost Mode, 7-1 Wild Desert, 8-1 Startled, Naval Light, 10-1 Ironwill, 12-1 Proud Nation, Egoli, Aqpan, Marengo Storm.

Wright choice: Marengo Storm took time to get on top in a messy three-runner race at Newmarket; can improve **Dangers**: Naval Light, Wild Desert

4.45 British Stallion Studs EBF Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £38,655: 7f) (14)

1	(11)	2	**AL WATHBA** 21 C Appleby 9-2	W Buick	♦89
2	(13)		**BUNDABERG** G & J Moore 9-2	D Egan	--
3	(3)	20	**CHARTED COURSE** 45 R & P Fahey 9-2	J P Spencer	83
4	(7)		**DONTWORRYABOUTME** C Hills 9-2	J Watson	--
5	(6)		**HOWZATT** James Owen 9-2	L Morris	--
6	(12)	4	**LEADLIGHT** 44 J P O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	D Browne McMonagle	83
7	(9)	44	**MAGI MELCHIOR** 19 (BF) R Hannon 9-2	S M Levey	66
8	(8)	3	**MARKET LEADER** 19 (BF) K R Burke 9-2	J Doyle	66
9	(2)	443	**RAFE'S DA MAN** 15 R Hannon 9-2	P Dobbs	82
10	(10)	2	**REGENCY ROYAL** 22 A Balding 9-2	C Hutchinson	77
11	(5)		**RUPERT THE BRAVE** Oliver Cole 9-2	T Marquand	--
12	(14)	4	**SPEAKERS CORNER** 14 A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	R L Moore	80
13	(4)		**SPEYSIDE** H Palmer 9-2	D Probert	--
14	(1)	6	**WALKIN ON THE MOON** 21 R Spencer 9-2	S Osborne	73

7-2 Al Wathba, 4-1 Leadlight, 5-1 Regency Royal, Charted Course, 8-1 Speakers Corner, 10-1 Market Leader, Rafe's da Man, 16-1 Magi Melchior.

Wright choice: Charted Course was badly drawn when tenth in the Windsor Castle at Royal Ascot **Dangers**: Regency Royal, Leadlight

5.20 Coral Rewards Shaker Handicap (£25,770: 1m 1f) (18)

1	(1)	-00010	**ROCK OF CASHEL** 44 (D) N Petersen (NOR) 4-9-12	J P Spencer	65
2	(5)	226-55	**ALPHA CRUCIS** 57 (P,CD) G & J Moore 6-9-11	J Watson	90
3	(12)	56-013	**BOYFRIEND** 50 R Hannon 5-9-10	P Dobbs	90
4	(18)	300-45	**REAL GAIN** 86 (BF,D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 6-9-10	J Doyle	88
5	(16)	5-2233	**EL MATADOR** 37 R Beckett 4-9-9	H Crouch	88
6	(15)	3-6244	**AMMES** 28 (V) James Owen 4-9-9	K Shoemark	91
7	(4)	01-036	**SPELL MASTER** 21 (C) Oli Rix 4-9-9	R Dawson	90
8	(7)	-02500	**NOSTRUM** 21 (P) M Appleby 6-9-8	J Hart	89
9	(10)	0-2110	**SWEET REWARD** 50 (CD) J Portman 9-9-8	R Hornby	88
10	(13)	56-610	**POINT OF CONTACT** 28 (BF,D) A Balding 4-9-8	O Murphy	91
11	(9)	120106	**SHAFDAR** 49 (T,D) I Williams 4-9-8	D Egan	89
12	(14)	2-1302	**CREST OF FIRE** 22 (BF) J Channon 3-9-6	T Marquand	♦96
13	(3)	5313-5	**THINTHREAD** 30 (P,D) G Baker 4-9-6	P Cosgrave	15
14	(11)	0-0504	**GREAT CHIEFTAIN** 17 (B,C) Oliver Cole 5-9-5	D Probert	77
15	(8)	6-6006	**FIRST AMBITION** 30 Michael Keady 5-9-4	D Muscutt	84
16	(6)	2-2410	**BLUE COURVOISIER** 44 C Cox 3-9-3	S Osborne	92
17	(17)	0220-5	**ALCARAZ** 72 (D) G Baker 7-9-3	C Y Ho	58
18	(2)	0-0403	**THUNDER WONDER** 32 (D) C Johnston 4-9-3	M Ghiani	83

5-1 Crest of Fire, 11-2 El Matador, 6-1 Boyfriend, 7-1 Real Gain, 8-1 Ammes, 10-1 Spell Master, 12-1 Point Of Contact, 14-1 Alpha Crucis, Thunder Wonder.

Wright choice: Spell Master just failed to last home tried over ten furlongs in the John Smith's Cup **Dangers**: Crest Of Fire, Real Gain

Newmarket
Rob Wright

1.33 Gone By
2.13 Rollthedicebaby
2.48 Jessica
3.23 Sierra Sands
3.58 Divine Knight
4.33 Food For Thought
5.10 Sound And Vision

Going: good to firm **Draw:** no advantage Racing TV

1.33 British Stallion Studs EBF Chalice Stakes (Fillies' & Mares' Listed) (£39,697: 1m 4f) (9) ITV

1	(7)	1-4004	**FRANCOPHONE** 14 C Johnston 5-9-9	P-L Jamin	96
2	(4)	52-044	**MISS JUSTICE** 28 (H,T,D) B Meehan 5-9-9	J Leavy	♦103
3	(3)	13244-	**ORCHARD KEEPER** 296 (C) R Varian 5-9-9	J Mitchell	94
4	(9)	13-103	**ORIONIS** 14 (D) W Haggas 4-9-9	C Fallon	96
5	(6)	30-225	**REVOIR** 14 (V,BF) R Beckett 4-9-9	R Clutterbuck	103
6	(2)	0121-6	**RYKA** 92 (D) D O'Meara 4-9-9	C Lee	77
7	(5)	2-211	**GONE BY** 32 (D) R Beckett 3-8-13	C Bishop	93
8	(1)	1-142	**ROMANTIC SYMPHONY** 44 C Appleby 3-8-13	B Loughnane	102
9	(8)	2-612	**SUNSHINE STAR** 12 J & T Gosden 3-8-13	R Havlin	86

2-1 Romantic Symphony, 7-2 Revoir, 11-2 Orionis, 8-1 Francophone, 10-1 Gone By, Miss Justice, 14-1 Ryka, 16-1 Orchard Keeper, Sunshine Star.

Wright choice: Gone By was unsuited by a slow early pace at Newmarket last time, doing well to win narrowly; more to come **Dangers**: Romantic Symphony, Sunshine Star

2.13 British Stallion Studs EBF Fillies' Nursery (2-Y-O: £20,616: 6f) (9)

1	(5)	110	**LOVE A GIGGLE** 45 K R Burke 9-9	C Lee	91
2	(7)	106	**ACCLAMATION STAR** 22 (D) James Owen 9-8	C Fallon	♦94
3	(8)	2011	**GLAMORIZE** 11 (P) G Scott 9-5	B Loughnane	89
4	(1)	4211	**HAVANA SPRITE** 37 (CD) J Tate 9-4	J Mitchell	88
5	(9)	210	**ROLLTHEDICEBABY** 14 (D) R Hannon 8-10	J Leavy	80
6	(2)	446311	**LADY DUBLIN** 8 (P,D) O Pears 8-6	T Kiely-Marshall (5)	76
7	(3)	514	**DONEGAL ROSE** 22 (D) H Palmer 8-2	J F Egan	81
8	(6)	2221	**FIRE THUNDER** 17 (D) M Botti 8-2	Laura Pearson	77
9	(4)	063130	**HOLI SCARLETT** 14 S C Williams 8-2	Olivia Haines (7)	68

11-4 Havana Sprite, 7-2 Glamorize, 6-1 Rollthedicebaby, 13-2 Acclamation Star, Love A Giggle, 10-1 Fire Thunder, 14-1 Lady Dublin, Holi Scarlett, 16-1 Donegal Rose.

2.48 British EBF Fillies' Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,700: 7f) (7)

1	(2)		**ASHEYRA** R Varian 9-2	J Mitchell	--
2	(4)		**GIVE ME A BOW** W Stone 9-2	Josephine Gordon	--
3	(6)		**HALEEMA** C Appleby 9-2	B Loughnane	--
4	(5)		**JESSICA** K P De Foy 9-2	Laura Pearson	--
5	(1)	03	**KIAH** 14 B Meehan 9-2	J Leavy	♦66
6	(3)	00	**PHILLIPA** 15 James Horton 9-2	C Lee	35
7	(7)		**SPIRITED GESTURE** J & T Gosden 9-2	R Havlin	--

15-8 Haleema, 5-2 Spirited Gesture, 3-1 Asheyra, 13-2 Jessica, 8-1 Kiah, 66-1 Give Me A Bow, 100-1 Phillipa.

3.23 Turners Handicap (3-Y-O: £6,442: 7f) (6)

1	(1)	-42061	**TRYST** 17 (P,D) G Boughey 9-11	B Loughnane	♦85
2	(3)	-40311	**SIERRA SANDS** 22 (CD) E Dunlop 9-8	R Havlin	84
3	(5)	255124	**SPIRIT OF SAXONY** 28 (D) E J-Houghton 9-8	C Bishop	84
4	(6)	5-2322	**HARDY'S HERO** 9 (P,BF) W Haggas 9-5	C Fallon	82
5	(4)	121512	**LION OF MALI** 22 (D) J Fanshawe 8-11	J Mitchell	74
6	(2)	04-060	**ELECTRICAL** 31 Brian Toomey 8-10	J Leavy	66

5-2 Hardy's Hero, 3-1 Lion of Mali, 4-1 Sierra Sands, Tryst, 9-2 Spirit Of Saxony, 50-1 Electrical.

3.58 Turners Park Group Ltd Handicap (£10,308: 1m 4f) (8)

1	(7)	4513-0	**HAKU** 185 (D) M Loughnane 7-9-9	C Bishop	85
2	(4)	1-1313	**WAY OF LIFE** 15 (D) J Portman 8-9-9	O Tubb (5)	83
3	(3)	313114	**SIXPACK** 27 (P,C,D) James Owen 6-9-9	B Loughnane	♦88
4	(8)	64-563	**ARQOOB** 29 (B,C,D) L Wadham 8-9-7	J Mitchell	85
5	(5)	-04566	**GREEK ORDER** 33 (P) M Bell 6-9-6	P-L Jamin	87
6	(1)	40-633	**DIVINE KNIGHT** 21 W Haggas 5-9-4	C Fallon	86
7	(2)	0364-1	**ALMEKAREM** 10 Sir M Prescott 4-8-13	R Clutterbuck	78
8	(6)	43-522	**FIRST OFFICER** 21 (CD) J Chapple-Hyam 7-8-12	A Egan (7)	78

2-1 Divine Knight, 9-2 First Officer, 11-2 Haku, 6-1 Way Of Life, 15-2 Arqoob, 10-1 Almekarem, 12-1 Greek Order, Sixpack.

4.33 National Stud Fillies' Handicap (£6,542: 1m 2f) (4)

1	(3)	62-412	**FOOD FOR THOUGHT** 21 (D) R Beckett 3-9-9	R Clutterbuck	82
2	(4)	10-235	**THALUNA** 21 W Haggas 3-9-9	C Fallon	♦83
3	(1)	2-625	**HOLLYWELL STREAM** 24 J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-7	B Loughnane	81
4	(2)	-11565	**VALKYRIE STORM** 12 E J-Houghton 3-9-2	C Bishop	77

11-10 Food For Thought, 9-4 Thaluna, 100-30 Hollywell Stream, 12-1 Valkyrie Storm.

5.10 Turners Of Soham Handicap (£5,154: 5f) (6)

1	(6)	323023	**MERRIMACK** 5 (T,V,D) S C Williams 5-9-13	C R Lyons (7)	70
2	(4)	065511	**SILKY ROBIN** 40 (B,D) Brian Toomey 5-9-12	J Leavy	68
3	(3)	124004	**TUSCAN POINT** 15 (E,T,D) Adam Kirby 4-9-11	W Carson	♦73
4	(2)	431-53	**SOUND AND VISION** 14 (T,D) E Walker 3-9-10	B Loughnane	69
5	(5)	6/4111	**DOTTIE DIAMOND** 11 (D) W Stone 4-9-9	J Mitchell	65
6	(1)	-36406	**ANGEL SUMMER** 5 P Owens 3-8-10	C Fallon	49

2-1 Merrimack, 5-2 Silky Robin, 4-1 Sound And Vision, 9-2 Dottie Diamond, 12-1 Angel Summer, 20-1 Tuscan Point.

Thirsk
Rob Wright

1.38 Palm Reader
2.08 Mr Swivell
2.43 Brighton Beach
3.17 Rotokura Belle
3.47 Asuka
4.22 La Peregrina
4.55 Kings Merchant

Going: good-good to firm in places
Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best Racing TV

1.38 Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,940: 5f) (8)

1	(4)	1	**PALM READER** 28 (T,D) D Carroll 9-11	Z Wheatley
2	(6)	50	**ARTICULATE** 12 K Frost 9-4	W Pyle
3	(5)	5	**BACHA** 35 R & P Fahey 9-4	C Hardie
4	(7)	23	**BATTLE FEVER** 15 K Ryan 9-4	K Stott
5	(2)		**RED BLUE POINT** J Tate 9-4	S De Sousa
6	(1)	05	**RIVER JORDAN** 21 Phillip Makin 9-4	C Beasley
7	(8)	0	**UNBEATABLE FAME** 12 R & P Fahey 9-4	O McSweeney
8	(3)	0	**SUENICORA STAR** 7 B Ellison 8-13	B Robinson

6-4 Palm Reader, 2-1 Battle Fever, 6-1 Red Blue Point, 8-1 Bacha, 12-1 River Jordan, 20-1 Suenicora Star, 25-1 Unbeatable Fame, 66-1 Articulate.

2.08 Handicap (£26,170: 1m) (12) ITV

1	(12)	214-0	**FONDO BLANCO** 44 (D) R Varian 4-10-2	S De Sousa
2	(1)	0-100	**DAIN MA NUT IN** 21 (D) L Russell & M Scudamore 5-9-11	Lexie Clarkson (7)
3	(4)	63551	**NORTHERN EXPRESS** 22 (P,CD) M Dods 8-9-11	C Beasley
4	(11)	0-441	**PURE LEGEND** 69 (D) K Ryan 4-9-10	K Stott
5	(8)	00000	**WITCH HUNTER** 35 (D) R Hannon 7-9-7	S C Cronin (5)
6	(10)	6-005	**TUSCAN HILLS** 21 (CD) N Tinkler 4-9-7	F McManoman
7	(5)	10000	**MIRSKY** 28 (CD) D O'Meara 7-9-7	D Tudhope
8	(2)	-0042	**MR SWIVELL** 21 (D) K P De Foy 5-9-7	C Hardie
9	(3)	12456	**DOSMAN** 37 (D) Oli Rix 5-9-5	J Peate
10	(6)	31003	**STERLING KNIGHT** 23 (D) E Dunlop 7-9-5	J Callan (3)
11	(9)	04110	**PRIAPOS** 23 (P,D) Phillip Makin 4-9-0	O McSweeney
12	(7)	5-131	**JEDDAAL** 49 (D) E Walker 3-8-10	G Downing

3-1 Jeddaal, 5-1 Northern Express, 11-2 Mr Swivell, 8-1 Pure Legend, Fondo Blanco, 12-1 Tuscan Hills, Sterling Knight, Dosman, Mirsky.

Wright choice: Mr Swivell can build on his second in a stronger race at York **Dangers**: Dain Ma Nut In, Dosman

2.43 Stakes (£5,400: 1m) (7)

1	(2)	01	**LE SAMOURAI** 30 (T) R Beckett 3-9-11	E Greatrex
2	(3)	0	**MORTY ROBINSON** 9 B Ellison 6-9-11	J Garritty
3	(5)	6	**BEN TRAVATO** 13 B Ellison 3-9-4	F McManoman
4	(1)	4-5	**TEST RUN** 16 M & D Easterby 3-9-4	B Garritty
5	(4)	0-0	**WEST SLEEKBURN LAD** 57 P Niven 3-9-4	C Hardie
6	(6)	53	**BRIGHTON BEACH** 22 W Haggas 3-8-13	D Tudhope
7	(7)	22	**REGAL DESIRE** 39 B Ellison 3-8-13	B Robinson

6-4 Regal Desire, 13-8 Brighton Beach, 3-1 Le Samourai, 14-1 Test Run, 33-1 Ben Travato, 100-1 Morty Robinson, 150-1 West Sleekburn Lad.

3.17 Handicap (£6,281: 5f) (12)

1	(3)	22015	**TRUE PROMISE** 22 (D) Fionn McSharry 5-10-1	O McSweeney
2	(11)	66325	**MOULIN BOOJ** 29 (CD) G Scott 6-10-1	K Stott
3	(4)	52546	**TIVA** 29 (T,V,D) D O'Meara 4-9-13	D Tudhope
4	(8)	25020	**AMERICAN BAY** 21 (CD) P Midgley 5-9-10	J Callan (3)
5	(7)	01400	**CASTAN** 22 (P,CD) B Smart 6-9-10	B Robinson
6	(6)	13121	**ROCK OF ENGLAND** 15 (C,D) P Midgley 6-9-10	B Garritty
7	(2)	U5305	**ACCRUAL** 26 (BF,D) R Carr 5-9-9	W Pyle
8	(1)	-3055	**COMIC STRIP** 33 (P,T,D) S & E Crisford 3-9-9	C Beasley
9	(5)	4-062	**MONDAMMEJ** 11 (D) A Brittain 9-9-8	C Hardie
10	(9)	64103	**ROTOKURA BELLE** 22 (D) I Furtado 3-9-6	S De Sousa
11	(12)	00640	**MUKER** 22 (CD) N Tinkler 8-9-6	F McManoman
12	(10)	21552	**CANARIA QUEEN** 8 (P,D) T Easterby 6-9-2	D Fentiman

3-1 Rock Of England, 5-1 Rotokura Belle, Mondammej, 8-1 Canaria Queen, 10-1 Tiva, Moulin Booj, True Promise, 14-1 Comic Strip, American Bay, Accrual.

3.47 Handicap (£9,720: 7f) (16)

1	(16)	0-002	**YORKSHIRE** 14 (T,CD) E Bethell 6-9-11	K Stott
2	(9)	2/000	**CROUPIER** 22 (D) J Parkinson & S Smith 7-9-8	S De Sousa
3	(2)	1/21	**ASUKA** 10 G Boughey 4-9-8	J Callan (3)
4	(1)	320-0	**AURORA MAJESTY** 57 (D) A Watson 4-9-8	W Cox
5	(13)	66064	**ANGEL HUNTER** 22 (B,D) R Hannon 4-9-7	S C Cronin (5)
6	(6)	1/0-2	**YANKEE DUDE** 117 (D) W Greatrex 4-9-7	E Greatrex
7	(5)	00-10	**OUR HAVANA** 22 (P,D) R & P Fahey 5-9-5	O McSweeney
8	(4)	01260	**BRIGHTON BOY** 35 (CD) T Easterby 4-9-4	D Fentiman
9	(11)	30500	**NEW IMAGE** 21 (D) D O'Meara 6-9-3	D Tudhope
10	(8)	02231	**IT JUST TAKES TIME** 12 (CD) M Walford 8-9-3	J Garritty
11	(14)	53220	**ANDESITE** 22 (P,T) Roger Fell 4-9-2	C Horgan (5)
12	(15)	-0155	**OBELIX** 21 (D) J Camacho 6-9-1	B Robinson
13	(3)	01042	**GLENFINNAN** 28 (H,D) M Dods 6-8-12	C Beasley
14	(7)	-3125	**KING'S SCHOOL** 23 (P,T,D) G Tutty 5-8-11	B Garritty
15	(10)	34622	**WOODSTOCK** 7 (V,D) R Carr 6-8-10	C Hardie
16	(12)	56600	**ENOLA GREY** 7 (D) G Tutty 6-8-5	W Pyle

5-2 Asuka, 9-2 Yorkshire, 5-1 It Just Takes Time, 10-1 Angel Hunter, 12-1 Woodstock, Andesite, 14-1 Yankee Dude, Obelix, Glenfinnan.

4.22 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 4f) (4)

1	(1)	04355	**LUDO'S LANDING** 8 (CD) C Johnston 6-10-2	S De Sousa
2	(3)	1-004	**NORTHERN BRAVE** 43 M Dods 3-9-8	C Beasley
3	(2)	55022	**LA PEREGRINA** 23 (BF) E Walker 3-9-3	G Downing
4	(4)	-0564	**THAT DARN CANTOR** 14 (P) E Dunlop 3-9-2	J Callan (3)

1-2 La Peregrina, 5-1 Northern Brave, 13-2 That Darn Cantor, 7-1 Ludo's Landing.

4.55 Handicap (£3,140: 6f) (9)

1	(2)	01460	**NORTHCLIFF** 21 (V,D) R Burdon 6-9-13	S De Sousa
2	(3)	00015	**GREAT** 12 (D) S England 4-9-13	J England
3	(5)	00214	**KINGS MERCHANT** 10 (P,CD) P Kirby 5-9-12	C Hardie
4	(9)	04430	**MALDEVIOUS** 36 (P,T) B Ellison 4-9-11	B Robinson
5	(7)	20/00	**KHABIB** 46 (P) R Craggs 8-9-10	C Horgan (5)
6	(6)	0-020	**MECCA'S SYMPHONY** 43 (T) M Dods 4-9-8	C Beasley
7	(8)	60344	**BAY BREEZE** 23 (P,CD) T Easterby 7-9-8	D Fentiman
8	(1)	-4606	**FANJOVE** 37 (P) E Dunlop 3-9-8	J Callan (3)
9	(4)	50000	**LORD ABAMA** 46 (B,CD) M Dods 7-9-4	B Garritty

7-2 Northcliff, 4-1 Great, 9-2 Kings Merchant, 6-1 Maldevious, 8-1 Lord Abama, Fanjove, 10-1 Bay Breeze, 14-1 Khabib, 16-1 Mecca's Symphony.

RESULTS

Commonwealth Games

Glasgow *medal events only*

Athletics: Leading final positions: Men: 10,000m race walk I Beacroft (Aus) 38min 45.51sec; 2, S Kihu (Ken) 38:46.57; 3, E Dunfee (Can) 40:03.39. **Women: 800m** 1, G Hunter Bell (Eng) 1:59.51; 2, L Odira (Ken) 2:00.58; 3, S Billings (Aus) 2:00.61.

Boxing: Bronze medal bouts: Men: 90kg C Williams (Wales) bt G McAllister (N Ire) 5-0pts; I Okoh (Eng) bt R McNulty (Scot) 5-0. **80kg** A Ankush (India) bt J Ofori (Can) 5-0; D Shittu (Eng) bt P Trainor (Aus) 5-0. **70kg** O Holley-Sotomi (Wales) bt M Clair (Maur) 5-0; J McConnell (N Ire) bt S Kerr (Scot) 5-0. **65kg** J Cassar (Aus) bt P Khoahli (Lesotho) 5-0; P Mughalzai (Eng) bt E Katema (Zam) 4-1. **55kg** J Dixon (Aus) bt A Mohammed (Gha) 4-1; J Mandengbam (India) bt P Haoseb (Nam) 5-0. **Women: 75kg** 1, E-S Greentree (Aus) bt M Smith (Eng) 3-2; L Borgohain (India) bt T Taafaki (Tuv) 5-0. **70kg** A Choudhary (India) bt R Eccles (Wales) 4-0; C Reid (Eng) bt L Pergoliti (Aus) 5-0. **65kg** K Rock (N Ire) bt C Rainey (Scot) 3-2; S Hickey (Eng) bt E Bryson (Aus) 5-0. **60kg** M-B Al-Ahmadieh (Can) bt F Zahra (Pak) rsc; P Priya (India) bt L Kings-Wheatley (Eng) 5-0. **57kg** M Walsh (N Ire) bt J Daunakamakama (Fij) 5-0; J Jaismine (India) bt R Maselela (Lesotho) rsc. **54kg** S Delgado (Can) bt L Mackie (Eng) 4-1; P Preeti (India) bt C Mwape (Zam) 5-0. **51kg** S Sakshi (India) bt A-J Wall (Can) 5-0; R White (Eng) bt M Araes (Nam) rsc.

Judo: Men: -66kg: Bronze medal bouts M Fryer (Eng) bt M Agbo (Nigeria) Ippon 101-0; P Christodoulides (Cyp) bt V Middleton (Aus) 1s2-0s1. **Gold** J Frascadore (Can)bt G Balarjishvili (Cypr) 1s2-0s2. **-60kg: Bronze** C Ayre (Eng) bt R Wali (Ken) Ippon 112-0; P Antun Neto (Aus) bt T Phuthego (Bots) Ippon 100s1-0s. **Gold** H Singh (India) bt J Katz (Aus) 10-0. **Women: -57kg: Bronze** D Breytenbach (SA) bt M Begue (Maur) Ippon 100-0; L Nairne (Eng) bt F Agyei (Gha) Ippon 100-0. **Gold** A Toprak (Eng) bt Y Mourya (India) Ippon 100s2-0s. **-52kg: Bronze** T Keen (Eng) bt L Hodson (Wales) Ippon 100s1-0s3; M Baba Matia (Camer) bt T Easton (Aus) bt Ippon 100s1-0. **Gold** E Beaton (Can) bt S Asvesta (Cyp) 1-0. **-48kg: Bronze** K Esposito (Malta) bt E Ewing (Scot) Ippon 101-0s1; S Shaw (Scot) bt B Babutsi (Bots) Ippon 100-0. **Gold** A Dey (India) bt H Quach (Can) 2s1-1.

Track cycling: Men: 4,000m individual pursuit: Bronze medal race J Moriarty (Aus) 4min 957sec M Bostock (IoM) +0.863sec. **Gold** O Bleddyn (Aus) 4:03.898 (Games record) bt C Leahy (Aus) +3.985. **Keirin** 1, M Awang (Malay); 2, L Hoffman (Aus) +0.109; 3, H Ledingham-Horn (Eng) +0.243. **Elimination** 1, B Agnoletto (Aus); 2, M Stewart (Scot); 3, H Hobbs (Eng). **Women: 4,000m individual pursuit: Bronze** E Boothman (Scot) 4:30.251 bt B Botha (NZ) +1.245. **Gold** A Morris (Wales) 4:24.272 (Games record) bt J Knight (Eng) +6.141. **Sprint: Bronze** R Edmunds (Wales) bt N Mohd Asri (Malay) 2-0. **Gold** E Finucane (Wales) bt S Capewell (Eng) 2-0. **10km scratch** G Baker (Aus); 2, S Donnelly (NZ); 3, E Boothman (Scot).

Leading medals	G	S	B	Total
1, Australia	55	28	42	**125**
2, England	17	32	29	**78**
3, Canada	17	14	20	**51**
4, Scotland	10	8	16	**34**

Cricket

The Hundred

Men: Old Trafford Manchester Super Giants 137-7 (J Buttler 55 not out); Trent Rockets.

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Manchester SG	3	2	1	0	0	**8**	1.19
Trent Rockets	3	2	1	0	0	**8**	0.82
Leeds Sunrisers	3	2	1	0	0	**8**	0.03
MI London	4	2	2	0	0	**8**	-0.08
Welsh Fire	3	2	1	0	0	**8**	-0.43
London Spirit	3	1	2	0	0	**4**	0.12
Southern Brave	4	1	3	0	0	**4**	0.02
B'ham Phoenix	3	1	2	0	0	**4**	-1.48

Women: Old Trafford Trent Rockets 153-8 (S Dunkley 57, S Luff 51); Manchester Super Giants 122 (A Gardner 4-16). *Rockets (4pts) won by 31 runs.*

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Southern Brave	4	4	0	0	0	**16**	0.49
Trent Rockets	4	3	1	0	0	**12**	2.08
Manchester SG	4	2	1	0	1	**10**	0.71
London Spirit	3	1	1	1	0	**6**	-0.97
Leeds Sunrisers	3	1	2	0	0	**4**	0.47
Welsh Fire	3	1	2	0	0	**4**	0.44
MI London	4	0	3	1	0	**2**	-1.38
B'ham Phoenix	3	0	2	0	1	**2**	-3.44

Metro Bank Cup

Group A: Bristol Surrey 311-5 (D Sibley 101); Gloucestershire.

Canterbury Somerset 313-9; Kent 314-8 (D Bell-Drummond 100). *Kent (4pts) won by two wickets.*

Northampton Northamptonshire 246; Leicestershire 248-2 (R Patel 115). *Leicestershire (4pts) won by eight wickets.*

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Lancashire	4	3	1	0	0	**12**	0.25
Notts	4	3	0	0	0	**12**	0.22
Leics	5	3	2	0	0	**12**	0.13
Somerset	4	2	2	0	0	**8**	0.60
Surrey	4	2	2	0	0	**8**	-0.03
Kent	4	2	2	0	0	**8**	-0.38
Gloucs	3	1	2	0	0	**4**	0.22
Warks	4	1	3	0	0	**4**	-0.50
Northants	4	1	3	0	0	**4**	-0.58

Group B: Repton Derbyshire 315-5 (B Guest 108 not out); Glamorgan 271. *Derbyshire (4pts) won by 44 runs*. **Chelmsford** Essex 317 (N Thain 109; A Sharma 5 for 51); Hampshire 321-7. *Hampshire (4pts) won by three wickets*. **Worcester** Middlesex 293-7 (J De Caires 130); Worcestershire 294-6 (J Libby 109 not out). *Worcestershire (4pts) won by four wickets*. **York** Durham 165; Yorkshire 167-3. *Yorkshire (4pts) won by seven wickets*.

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Middlesex	4	3	1	0	0	**12**	2.18
Yorkshire	4	3	1	0	0	**12**	0.99
Durham	3	3	0	0	0	**12**	0.57
Worcs	4	3	1	0	0	**12**	0.17
Hampshire	4	2	2	0	0	**8**	-0.49
Derbyshire	4	1	3	0	0	**4**	-0.19
Essex	4	1	3	0	0	**4**	-0.29
Glamorgan	5	1	4	0	0	**4**	-1.13
Sussex	4	1	3	0	0	**2**	-1.32

Golf

AIG Women's Open

Lytham St Annes: Leaders after two rounds: 135 Hae-Ran Ryu (S Kor) 66, 69. **136** S Kuwaki (Japan) 66, 70. **137** Y Noh (US) 67, 70; A Thitikul (Thai) 64, 73. **Leading British: 140** L Woad 69, 71; C Hull 69, 71. **141** M Rhodes 71, 70.

FIXTURES

Today

Football

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Carabao Cup: Preliminary round Tranmere v Rochdale.

William Hill Scottish Premiership Aberdeen v Hearts (5.30); Falkirk v St Mirren.

William Hill Championship Ayr v Arbroath; Inverness CT v Dunfermline; Livingston v Queen's Park; Morton v Partick; Raith v Stenhousemuir. **League One** Alloa v East Fife; Cove Rangers v Airdrieonians; East Kilbride v Queen of the South; Montrose v Hamilton; Peterhead v Ross County. **League Two** Annan v The Spartans; Clyde v Stranraer; Edinburgh City v Elgin; Forfar v Kelty Hearts; Stirling Albion v Dumbarton.

Cricket

The Hundred: Edgbaston Birmingham Phoenix v Welsh Fire (women 11.0, men 2.30). **Lord's** London Spirit v Southern Brave (women 2.30, men 6.0).

Golf

Lytham St Annes AIG Women's Open.

Rugby league

Betfred Super League Castleford v Warrington Wolves (3.0); Catalans Dragons v Wakefield Trinity (8.0); York Knights v St Helens (5.30).

Betfred Championship Barrow Raiders v Rochdale Hornets (6.0).

Tomorrow

Football

William Hill Scottish Premiership Hibernian v Motherwell (4.30); St Johnstone v Kilmarnock (2.0).

Cricket

The Hundred: Trent Bridge Trent Rockets v Sunrisers Leeds (women 11.0, men 2.30). **Kia Oval** MI London v Manchester Super Giants (women 2.30, men 6.0).

Metro Bank Cup (11.0) **Group A: Beckenham** Kent v Nottinghamshire. **Leicester** Leicestershire v Somerset. **Northampton** Northamptonshire v Lancashire. **Rugby** Warwickshire v Gloucestershire. **Group B: Derby** Derbyshire v Sussex. **Chelmsford** Essex v Worcestershire. **Utilita Bowl** Hampshire v Durham. **Lord's** Middlesex v Yorkshire.

Golf

Lytham St Annes AIG Women's Open.

Rugby league

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Betfred Championship Dewsbury Rams v Hunslet; Doncaster v Oldham; Midlands Hurricanes v Keighley Cougars (2.0); North Wales Crusaders v Goole Vikings; Sheffield Eagles v Halifax Panthers; Swinton Lions v Batley Bulldogs (2.0); Widnes Vikings v London Broncos; Workington Town v Newcastle Thunder.

Doncaster

Rob Wright

1.55 Kohana Nation
2.30 Weleyff
3.05 Tiora Time
3.40 Whiskey Pete
4.15 First Time
4.50 Sparkling Pink
5.25 Von Trotter
6.00 Celtic Arrow

Going: good to firm
Draw: high numbers best — Sky Sports Racing

1.55 Stakes (£5,400: 6f) (6)

1 (3) 00324 **BRASH** 12 (B) D & N Barron 3-9-7 — **D Nolan**
2 (5) 02- **KOHANA NATION** 225 C Hills 3-9-7 — **Oisin Orr**
3 (6) 20454 **STONEACRE JOE** 14 T Easterby 3-9-7 — **H Russell**
4 (4) 4 **TRIPLE P** 13 T Easterby 3-9-7 — **J Dickson (5)**
5 (1) 4-0 **SPRUCES DUE** 48 (H) M Mullineaux 4-9-6 — **K O'Neill**
6 (2) 3 **SAKURA IMPACT** 24 Mrs I G-Leveque 3-9-2 — **A Rawlinson**

11-8 Kohana Nation, 6-4 Brash, 4-1 Stoneacre Joe, 20-1 Triple P, Sakura Impact, 100-1 Spruces Due.

2.30 Nursery (2-Y-O: £5,653: 7f) (5)

1 (3) 236 **ENCOUNTER** 29 (BF) S Woods 9-9 — **N Callan**
2 (4) 31 **WELEYFF** 19 (D) E Bethell 9-8 — **O Orr**
3 (1) 23 **EIGHTH IMMORTAL** 22 (BF) Jack Jones 9-5 — **R Sexton**
4 (5) 624 **LINCOLN WARRIOR** 22 I Furtado 9-2 — **B McHugh**
5 (2) 400 **PRINCE KAMEO** 53 Sir M Prescott 8-7 — **JP Sullivan**

9-4 Weleyff, 5-2 Eighth Immortal, 4-1 Prince Kameo, 5-1 Lincoln Warrior, 11-2 Encounter.

3.05 Stakes (2-Y-O: £4,320: 6f 111yd) (13)

1 (3) 2 **ARENITE** 75 M Dods 9-2 — **D Costello**
2 (7) 56 **AUTUMN JEWEL** 28 B Smart 9-2 — **O Stammers**
3 (13) **BEARING IN TIME** T Easterby 9-2 — **R Sexton**
4 (6) **BLANQUITA** D Cunha 9-2 — **S Donohoe**
5 (8) 22300 **CHEEKY CHESCA** 17 (P) T Easterby 9-2 — **J Dickson (5)**
6 (4) **DAWN'S GIFT** Sara Ender 9-2 — **A Rawlinson**
7 (9) **EAGLE STORM** C Johnston 9-2 — **Oisin Orr**
8 (12) 0242 **FOREST BERRY** 8 (BF) Sir M Prescott 9-2 — **JP Sullivan**
9 (10) **PON PON DALIA** M Botti 9-2 — **J Gilligan**
10 (11) **ROMOTOSO** W Knight 9-2 — **Taylor Fisher**
11 (5) **THEFT** G Scott 9-2 — **L Wright (5)**
12 (1) **TIGGYWINKLE** O Pears 9-2 — **H Russell**
13 (2) 3 **TIORA TIME** 23 Tom Clover 9-2 — **N Callan**

5-2 Forest Berry, 11-4 Tiora Time, 13-2 Arenite, 8-1 Pon Pon Dalia, Eagle Storm, 10-1 Cheeky Chesca, 12-1 Theft, 16-1 Blanquita.

3.40 Handicap (£3,768: 1m 2f) (6)

1 (6) 04131 **SUPER HIT** 12 (H,T,D) James Owen 5-9-11 — **C Howarth (3)**
2 (1) 05066 **COSMOS RAJ** 16 (P,D) D O'Meara 8-9-9 — **D Nolan**
3 (3) 20034 **MARINER** 9 (P,T,C,D) J Candlish 5-9-6 — **J Fernandes (7)**
4 (4) 35500 **MAGIC RUNNER** 127 R Carr 4-9-2 — **JP Sullivan**
5 (5) 00006 **WHISKEY PETE** 9 (T) N Tinkler 5-8-13 — **A Jary (3)**
6 (2) 0U50- **STEPS IN TIME** J12 (P) P Kirby 5-8-12 — **B McHugh**

8-15 Super Hit, 7-2 Mariner, 8-1 Whiskey Pete, 14-1 Magic Runner, 25-1 Steps In Time, Cosmos Raj.

4.15 Handicap (3-Y-O: £5,653: 7f) (6)

1 (6) 221-4 **HAADERR** 17 (T,BF,D) E Bethell 9-9 — **O Orr**
2 (2) -2301 **SUSPICIOUS MINDZ** 35 S Spencer 9-8 — **S Farmer (5)**
3 (3) -0633 **FIRST TIME** 14 R & P Fahey 9-6 — **B McHugh**
4 (1) 31230 **VIDMIYR** 35 (D) J Candlish 9-4 — **J Fernandes (7)**
5 (5) 50303 **GOLDWORK** 7 (B,T) E J-Houghton 9-0 — **O Carmichael (7)**
6 (4) 6-240 **SHADOW RUN** 59 S Dixon 8-10 — **K O'Neill**

11-4 Suspicious Mindz, 100-30 First Time, 7-2 Haaderr, 9-2 Goldwork, 8-1 Shadow Run, Vidmiyr.

4.50 Handicap (Div I: £3,768: 7f) (11)

1 (6) 00314 **MOONHALL LASS** 28 (P,D) James Owen 4-9-12 — **C Howarth**
2 (8) 34053 **GET UP EVERYBODY** 14 (BF) P Midgley 4-9-10 — **D Nolan**
3 (11) 61506 **OPERATION GIMCRACK** 43 (D) B Smart 6-9-9 — **O Stammers**
4 (4) 60000 **ARNAZ** 32 (P,T,D) M Loughnane 5-9-8 — **Oisin Orr**
5 (7) 50-00 **QUEENSMAITE** 95 S Bowring 4-9-7 — **A Rawlinson**
6 (3) 40-0 **DANRANA** 63 (H) Fionn McSharry 3-9-6 — **H Russell**
7 (5) 03043 **SPARKLING PINK** 14 (P) Adrian Nicholls 3-9-6 — **R Sexton**
8 (9) 22066 **EMERALD ARMY** 16 (D) R Carr 5-9-5 — **JP Sullivan**
9 (2) 43010 **HARES BREDTH** 31 (T) T Easterby 3-9-3 — **J Dickson (5)**
10 (10) 05-00 **RYEFIELD** 58 (V) L Mullaney 3-9-0 — **L Wright (5)**
11 (1) 55-60 **HAVANA OAKS** 26 I Furtado 3-8-12 — **J Haynes**

9-4 Get Up Everybody, 4-1 Sparkling Pink, Moonhall Lass, 13-2 Hares Bredth, 7-1 Emerald Army, 16-1 Arnaz, 20-1 Operation Gimcrack, Danrana.

5.25 Handicap (Div II: £3,768: 7f) (10)

1 (3) -4540 **DONALD** 23 D & N Barron 4-9-12 — **D Nolan**
2 (10) 6-030 **WILDE AND DANDY** 14 (CD) I Furtado 6-9-10 — **J Haynes**
3 (5) 3-050 **GROUNDSMAN** 24 (P,D) M Loughnane 4-9-9 — **O Orr**
4 (1) 00020 **SIR DAVID** 29 (D) N Tinkler 4-9-8 — **A Jary (3)**
5 (9) 0-060 **BARBUDA BAY** 49 R Teal 3-9-6 — **D Costello**
6 (4) 00062 **VON TROTTER** 14 M & D Easterby 3-9-6 — **O Stammers**
7 (7) -0500 **SPRINTING SPEED** 36 J Candlish 3-9-6 — **S Donohoe**
8 (2) 03140 **BACK FROM DUBAI** 48 (CD) S Bowring 9-9-3 — **A Rawlinson**
9 (8) 60006 **MAGIC LADY MAE** 11 L Mullaney 3-9-1 — **J Gilligan**
10 (6) 00230 **MISTER MCGREGOR** 22 (B,E) M Mullineaux 4-9-0 — **K O'Neill**

13-8 Von Trotter, 5-1 Wilde And Dandy, 7-1 Donald, 8-1 Back From Dubai, Sprinting Speed, 10-1 Sir David, 12-1 Mister Mcgregor, 14-1 Magic Lady Mae.

6.00 Handicap (£4,397: 6f) (8)

1 (8) -0022 **ANOTHER INVESTMENT** 28 (BF,CD) N Tinkler 7-9-11 — **A Jary (3)**
2 (3) 6450U **ZIGGY'S CONDOR** 3 (B,D) Adam Kirby 5-9-11 — **L Wright (5)**
3 (1) 06243 **MARK'S CHOICE** 26 (D) G Tutty 10-9-10 — **O Stammers**
4 (5) 60523 **SHAZANI** 36 (C,D) S Bowring 4-9-8 — **J Gilligan**
5 (7) 04214 **COME ON OVER** 11 (V,CD) D O'Meara 3-9-5 — **D Nolan**
6 (4) 04000 **AY GEE ELL** 21 (T,V) R & P Fahey 4-9-5 — **O Orr**
7 (2) 23531 **STARTLED LADY** 17 (D) W Knight 3-9-4 — **N Callan**
8 (6) 3422 **CELTIC ARROW** 31 J Camacho 3-9-4 — **R Sexton**

3-1 Startled Lady, 7-2 Another Investment, 4-1 Celtic Arrow, 5-1 Mark's Choice, 11-2 Shazani, 12-1 Come On Over, 14-1 Ziggy's Condor, 25-1 Ay Gee Ell.

Lingfield Park

Rob Wright

5.05 Bintknight
5.40 Panthere Noir
6.15 Campeona
6.45 Rogue Exile
7.15 Miss Moneypit
7.45 Musical Soldier
8.15 Allegrino

Going: good to firm-good in places
Draw: no advantage — Sky Sports Racing

5.05 Handicap (£5,653: 1m 2f) (5)

1 (1) 15054 **LONDONER** 9 (P,D) D & C Kubler 6-10-3 — **E Nader**
2 (4) 5-063 **PERCIVAL** 9 (D) D Cunha 4-10-0 — **Taryn Langley (5)**
3 (5) 33052 **EPICTETUS** 16 (D) J Osborne 6-9-10 — **W Carver**
4 (2) 01-00 **STARLIGHT TIME** 22 (H) R Varian 3-9-7 — **S D Bowen**
5 (3) 512 **BINTKNIGHT** 29 (CD) Harry Charlton 3-9-0 — **L Edmunds**

7-4 Bintknight, 100-30 Percival, 7-2 Epictetus, 9-2 Londoner, 15-2 Starlight Time.

5.40 Stakes (£3,454: 1m 2f) (6)

1 (6) 55-14 **ZAFAAN** 24 (P,D) Charlie Clover 6-9-9 — **S D Bowen**
2 (2) 04055 **CORMORANT ROCK** 17 J Boyle 3-9-1 — **L Catton (3)**
3 (1) 35264 **LAPIDARIST** 35 D M Simcock 3-9-1 — **Taryn Langley (5)**
4 (5) 63032 **PANTHERE NOIR** 7 (P) L Dace 3-9-1 — **R Kavanagh (3)**
5 (4) -6300 **PRIVATE PROJECT** 95 P Phelan 3-9-1 — **P Bradley**
6 (3) -0065 **RUIZ** 26 (H) S Dow 3-9-1 — **T Heard**

2-1 Panthere Noir, 5-2 Zafaan, 100-30 Lapidarist, 5-1 Private Project, 12-1 Cormorant Rock, 33-1 Ruiz.

6.15 Handicap (£4,397: 2m) (4)

1 (2) -6505 **NAVAL COMMAND** 16 (T) R Beckett 4-10-2 — **L Edmunds**
2 (1) 41-22 **AN BRADAN FEASA** J17 (D) Jack Jones 6-10-0 — **F Marsh**
3 (3) 11224 **LARAVIE** 8 (B,D) James Owen 7-9-11 — **H Davies**
4 (4) 0-211 **CAMPEONA** 9 (P,D) Sir M Prescott 3-9-0 — **D E Hogan**

11-10 Campeona, 100-30 An Bradan Feasa, 7-2 Laravie, 5-1 Naval Command.

6.45 Stakes (£4,320: 7f) (6)

1 (6) 3- **JUSTICE COURT** 241 (T) J Osborne 3-9-7 — **W Carver**
2 (5) 2 **ROGUE EXILE** 17 James Owen 3-9-7 — **H Davies**
3 (4) 435 **MALAKAI KITE** 39 (H) R Harris 3-9-5 — **P Bradley**
4 (1) 43 **MUCHACHO** 44 (T) H Kobeissi 3-9-5 — **S D Bowen**
5 (2) 5 **DAYNA** 26 E De Giles 3-9-2 — **O Lewis (5)**
6 (3) 05 **CALL ALERT** 21 W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-0 — **L Edmunds**

11-10 Rogue Exile, 13-8 Justice Court, 10-1 Muchacho, Malakai Kite, 20-1 Dayna, 25-1 Call Alert.

7.15 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,397: 6f) (7)

1 (4) 530 **ROGUE IMPERIAL** 33 A Watson 9-9 — **H Davies**
2 (1) 2241 **KNOCK THREE TIMES** 17 (CD) J Osborne 9-9 — **W Carver**
3 (6) 0450 **SEATHEGULLS** 14 (P) G & J Moore 9-4 — **F Marsh**
4 (7) 43 **LAYLATY** 23 Harry Charlton 9-2 — **L Edmunds**
5 (2) 21360 **SEED YA LATER** 14 (H) J Channon 9-1 — **Rose Dawes (5)**
6 (3) 04551 **MISS MONEYPIT** 10 (C) B Millman 9-0 — **P Bradley**
7 (5) 6005 **IL CAPO** 8 R Hannon 8-10 — **S D Bowen**

7-2 Knock Three Times, 9-2 Miss Moneypit, Laylaty, 5-1 Rogue Imperial, 6-1 Seed Ya Later, 13-2 Seathegulls, 7-1 Il Capo.

7.45 Handicap (£3,768: 7f) (8)

1 (2) 20221 **MUSICAL SOLDIER** 11 (P,T,D) Ollie Sangster 3-9-9 — **S D Bowen**
2 (4) 0-055 **FULFORD CROSS** 56 (D) D M Simcock 4-9-9 — **Taryn Langley (5)**
3 (1) 403F5 **MIGHTY RULER** 25 (P,D) M Attwater 4-9-9 — **F Marsh**
4 (7) 20644 **JACKSON STREET** 32 (D) M Attwater 5-9-8 — **P Bradley**
5 (6) 50461 **CRECIENTE** 10 (P,CD) B Millman 3-9-4 — **L Edmunds**
6 (3) 64104 **BEAU JARDINE** 11 (B,CD) R Cook & J Bridger 8-9-4 — **R Kavanagh (3)**
7 (5) 52564 **TWITCH** 18 (B,D) Craig Benton 9-9-0 — **Georgia Dobie**
8 (8) 06-50 **SATURDAY AGAIN** 157 (H) S Dow 3-8-11 — **T Heard**

11-8 Musical Soldier, 4-1 Beau Jardine, 6-1 Creciente, 13-2 Twitch, 10-1 Jackson Street, 12-1 Fulford Cross, 16-1 Mighty Ruler, 25-1 Saturday Again.

8.15 Handicap (£4,397: 1m) (5)

1 (3) U-331 **DISTINCT SPIRIT** 4 D & C Kubler 6-10-6(5ex) — **L Catton**
2 (2) -4215 **BOLD SUITOR** 52 (D) Craig Benton 9-9-12 — **J Glennon (7)**
3 (5) 50061 **WETSAND** 10 (V,C,D) James Owen 3-9-9 — **Taryn Langley (3)**
4 (1) 31231 **ALLEGRINO** 24 A Balding 3-9-4 — **A Redman (7)**
5 (4) 30030 **SEARCHINGTHEBLUES** 15 M Usher 4-9-1 — **D J Murphy (5)**

15-8 Distinct Spirit, 9-4 Allegrino, 3-1 Wetsand, 13-2 Bold Suitor, 12-1 Searchingtheblues.

Hamilton Park

Rob Wright

5.50 California School
6.25 Tiernan
7.00 Cotton Bud
7.30 Arklow Lad
8.00 Harb
8.30 Ephron
9.00 Can I Kiss You

Going: good-good to soft in places
Draw: no advantage — Racing TV

5.50 Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,210: 6f) (5)

1 (5) **BEARING GIFTS** K Ryan 9-7 — **T Eaves**
2 (2) 6 **CALIFORNIA SCHOOL** 14 R Varian 9-7 — **P Mulrennan**
3 (3) 622 **HENLEY ON THAMES** 17 K P De Foy 9-7 — **S James**
4 (4) **POLYMER** B Haslam 9-7 — **A Mullen**
5 (1) 0 **THANKS HARRY** 21 T Dascombe 9-7 — **P J McDonald**

11-8 Henley On Thames, 9-4 California School, Bearing Gifts, 25-1 Polymer, 33-1 Thanks Harry.

6.25 Stakes (£7,290: 1m 3f) (5)

1 (5) 1-0 **KISSMEHONEYHONEY** 92 W Haggas 4-10-1 — **P Mulrennan**
2 (4) 0-602 **TIERNAN** 25 (BF) I Jardine 4-9-13 — **A Mullen**
3 (2) 4-222 **ACCORDING TO MARK** 23 (P) E Bethell 3-9-4 — **P J McDonald**
4 (1) 0-4 **SOTTSFIELD** 87 S Spencer 3-9-4 — **D Swift**
5 (3) **MIDNIGHT SERENADE** (H) R M Smith 3-8-13 — **Amie Waugh (3)**

7-4 Kissmehoneyhoney, 15-8 According To Mark, 2-1 Tiernan, 25-1 Sottsfield, 50-1 Midnight Serenade.

7.00 Handicap (£5,286: 1m 5f) (11)

1 (3) 5-450 **CABRERA** 15 E Bethell 5-10-4 — **P J McDonald**
2 (9) 5-301 **HIGH POINT** 51 I Jardine 5-10-2 — **A Mullen**
3 (4) -4310 **SECRET FORCE** J14 A Keatley 4-10-0 — **MP Sheehy**
4 (6) -0246 **GENTLE WARRIOR** 15 (P) K R Burke 4-9-9 — **S James**
5 (7) 42414 **DUNKELD DREAMER** 21 (BF) K R Burke 3-9-7 — **S Gray**
6 (2) 00000 **OURO PRETO** 7 I Jardine 5-9-3 — **A Brookes**
7 (10) 2-504 **EROICO** 38 M Todhunter 4-9-3 — **M Winn**
8 (1) -0066 **SPANISH HUSTLE** 21 (P,C) J Goldie 8-9-3 — **Kaiya Fraser**
9 (11) -2131 **GALLUS NORMAN** 43 J Goldie 7-9-2 — **P Mulrennan**
10 (8) 42-16 **COTTON BUD** 79 S Lycett 3-8-13 — **G Mangan**
11 (5) 5-24 **WOOTTON'S GAL** 36 R & P Fahey 3-8-5 — **E Tindall (5)**

3-1 High Point, 4-1 Secret Force, 5-1 Gallus Norman, 11-2 Cabrera, 8-1 Dunkeld Dreamer, 10-1 Gentle Warrior, Wootton's Gal, 12-1 Cotton Bud.

7.30 Handicap (£15,462: 5f) (14)

1 (11) 1-332 **COROLLA POINT** 36 (BF,CD) E Bethell 4-10-0 — **P J McDonald**
2 (10) 0-445 **PUROSANGUE** 36 (D) R Cowell 5-9-12 — **Kaiya Fraser**
3 (7) 13151 **ARKLOW LAD** 56 (P,T,D) M Appleby 4-9-9 — **C Whiteley (5)**
4 (13) 00060 **ANOTHER BAAR** 36 (T,D) A Keatley 6-9-8 — **MP Sheehy**
5 (6) 00010 **SOLAR ACLAIM** 35 (CD) J Camacho 5-9-8 — **S James**
6 (4) 4-U40 **FLUORESCENCE** 22 (D) E Bethell 4-9-7 — **G Mangan**
7 (9) 01344 **VANTHEMAN** 15 (B,CD) K Ryan 5-9-4 — **T Eaves**
8 (8) 54031 **JORDAN ELECTRICS** 12 (P,CD) J Goldie 10-9-3 — **P Mulrennan**
9 (12) 25063 **CANON'S HOUSE** 27 (CD) M & D Easterby 5-9-2 — **M Winn**
10 (2) 03261 **MANILA SCOUSE** 26 (T,C,D) T Easterby 7-9-1 — **S B Kirrane**
11 (3) 04260 **ETERNAL SUNSHINE** 7 (D) J Goldie 6-8-13 — **Lauren Young (5)**
12 (5) -0000 **VENTURE CAPITAL** 108 (W,P,D) K Ryan 5-8-13 — **S Gray**
13 (14) 22060 **FIVETHOUSANDTOONE** 35 (P) T Easterby 8-8-12 — **Amie Waugh (3)**
14 (1) -1220 **PARISIAC** 26 (P,CD) I Jardine 7-8-10 — **A Mullen**

4-1 Arklow Lad, 9-2 Corolla Point, 5-1 Jordan Electrics, 8-1 Manila Scouse, 10-1 Canon's House, Purosangue, 12-1 Vantheman, 14-1 others.

8.00 Handicap (£4,187: 5f) (12)

1 (6) 25504 **HUNDRED CAPS** 29 (P,D) J Camacho 4-9-9 — **S James**
2 (12) 23015 **STIRRUP CUP** 45 (P,T,BF,C) T Easterby 4-9-7 — **S B Kirrane**
3 (5) 00005 **TIRIAC** 36 (P,D) P Midgley 6-9-5 — **M Winn**
4 (1) 65340 **KING'S CROWN** 19 (P,T,D) M Dods 6-9-5 — **T Eaves**
5 (4) 21041 **LITTLE MI MI** 36 (D) I Jardine 5-9-4 — **A Mullen**
6 (3) 50040 **ORIENTAL PRINCE** 12 (D) J Goldie 5-9-3 — **P Mulrennan**
7 (11) 21613 **IRIS DANCER** 6 (B,C) T Davidson 8-9-1 — **Kaiya Fraser**
8 (8) 60103 **JM JHINGREE** 15 (B,CD) Ewan Whillans 4-9-0 — **G Fairley**
9 (9) 16030 **HARB** 7 (D) T Davidson 7-8-10 — **Amie Waugh (3)**
10 (2) 02226 **THUNDERSTORM KATIE** 21 (CD) J Goldie 5-8-9 — **Lauren Young (5)**
11 (7) 06664 **MOUNT RUAPEHU** 12 (D) I Jardine 6-8-7 — **A Brookes**
12 (10) 00-66 **NEVER DARK** 11 (CD) I Jardine 9-8-6 — **G Mangan**

9-2 Little Mi Mi, 6-1 Hundred Caps, 7-1 Thunderstorm Katie, Iris Dancer, 8-1 Stirrup Cup, Jm Jhingree, 10-1 Oriental Prince, Mount Ruapehu.

8.30 Handicap (£4,187: 1m) (10)

1 (4) 6041F **RAJAPOUR** 7 (P,T,D) D O'Meara 6-10-7 — **M Winn**
2 (2) 04440 **INTRUSIVELY** 23 M Appleby 4-10-2 — **T Eaves**
3 (7) 00600 **SUNRISEONTHEBOYNE** 60 (D) B Haslam 4-10-0 — **A Mullen**
4 (9) 15211 **MWAFAQ** 29 (P,CD) R & P Fahey 4-9-12 — **E Tindall (5)**
5 (5) 4346 **MIDSUMMER STORM** 39 (P) K R Burke 3-9-7 — **S James**
6 (3) 31033 **SANAFI ZABEEL** 16 (CD) J Goldie 5-9-6 — **P Mulrennan**
7 (1) -0000 **WATCHA SNOOP** 42 A Nicol 3-9-6 — **S Gray**
8 (6) 30022 **STARLINER** 12 (P,C,D) Miss L Perratt 5-9-4 — **Kaiya Fraser**
9 (8) -1520 **EPHRON** 33 (D) G Tutty 3-9-1 — **C Whiteley (5)**
10 (10) 05053 **YAASER** 12 (D) J Goldie 8-8-13 — **Lauren Young (5)**

5-2 Starliner, 3-1 Mwafaq, 5-1 Sanafi Zabeel, 6-1 Rajapour, 12-1 Midsummer Storm, Yaaser, Ephron, 16-1 Intrusively.

9.00 Handicap (£3,664: 1m 1f) (9)

1 (7) 25-66 **BRAES OF DOUNE** 19 (P) J Goldie 8-9-12 — **P Mulrennan**
2 (1) 05611 **PISANELLO** 3 (V,C,D) D O'Meara 9-9-12 — **C Whiteley (5)**
3 (8) 45554 **HOSTELRY** 21 (C,D) R Carr 9-9-9 — **T Eaves**
4 (2) -0051 **DEFENCE MISSILE** 7 (P) Miss L Perratt 4-9-8 — **Kaiya Fraser**
5 (9) 0465- **JENSON BENSON** 291 (P) S Lycett 8-9-7 — **G Mangan**
6 (4) 20600 **EVELYN'S PHOENIX** 48 (P,T,D) T Easterby 5-9-7 — **S B Kirrane**
7 (5) -2000 **CAN I KISS YOU** 16 C Kellett 4-9-4 — **A Mullen**
8 (3) 54000 **RING OF GOLD** 42 (V) M & D Easterby 9-9-3 — **L Chalkley (7)**
9 (6) 04640 **SAXON GRACE** 26 D Bourke 3-8-13 — **S Gray**

11-8 Pisanello, 3-1 Defence Missile, 5-1 Hostelry, 8-1 Braes Of Doune, 14-1 Jenson Benson, Saxon Grace, 25-1 Can I Kiss You, Evelyn's Phoenix, Ring Of Gold.

YESTERDAY'S RACING RESULTS

Goodwood

Going: Good to Firm

1.50 (2m 4f 137yd) 1, **Defiantly** (Dylan Browne McMonagle, 11-4); 2, Berkshire Sundance (28-1); 3, Gooloogong (100-1). 15 ran. NR: Anniversary, Believitanducan. 3l, 5l. J P O'Brien.

2.25 (1m) 1, **Shayem** (C Lee, 17-2); 2, Talk Of New York (2-5 fav); 3, Catullus (10-1). 7 ran. ½l, 2½l. K R Burke.

3.00 (1m) 1, **Archivist** (Callum Rodriguez, 16-1); 2, Cerulean Bay (12-1); 3, Classic (18-1). 18 ran. NR: Beagle Bay. 1¼l, ns. H Al Jehani.

3.35 (5f) 1, **American Affair** (P Mulrennan, 12-1); 2, Rumstar (6-1); 3, Time For Sandals (14-1). 15 ran. ½l, nk. J S Goldie.

4.10 (1m 1f 11yd) 1, **Galen** (Dylan Browne McMonagle, 3-1); 2, Boiling Point (10-3); 3, Jonquil (9-2). 7 ran. NR: Crown Of Oaks. nk, ½l. J P O'Brien.

4.45 (6f) 1, **Revels** (S H James, 11-1); 2, Dubai Champion (4-1); 3, Innichen (13-2). 18 ran. sh, ½l. K R Burke.

5.20 (1m 3f 44yd) 1, **Into The Light** (W Buick, 2-1); 2, Devil's Peak (11-2); 3, Waterford Castle (6-1). 13 ran. 17½l, ¾l. C Appleby.

5.55 (1m 1f 197yd) 1, **Silver Lake** (Saffie Osborne, 4-5 fav); 2, Lady Dora Mae (11-1); 3, Room Fourteen (3-1). 7 ran. 3l, 2l. W J Haggas.

Placepot: £710.80
Quadpot: £282.40

Newcastle

Going: Standard/Slow

2.10 (1m 2f 42yd) 1, **Wicklow Way** (J Garritty, 6-4 fav); 2, Millbuie (10-1); 3, Rogers Dream (7-2). 10 ran. 4¼l, nk. M Walford.

2.45 (6f) 1, **Sonic Angel** (J Mitchell, 4-5 fav); 2, Siouxperb (15-8); 3, Blue Pete (12-1). 8 ran. nk, 4¼l. S & E Crisford.

3.20 (2m 56yd) 1, **Ned Broy** (Mark Winn, 4-1); 2, Is She Now (9-1); 3, Time Turner (3-1). 9 ran. ½l, 37½l. I Jardine.

3.55 (5f) 1, **Houndhill** (Alex Jary, 8-1); 2, Brave Traveller (6-1); 3, Mayflyer (33-1). 12 ran. 1¼l, nk. N Tinkler.

4.30 (7f 14yd) 1, **Jamaican Storm** (O J Orr, 9-2); 2, Wish This (15-2); 3, Reginald Charles (6-4 fav). 10 ran. ¾l, ¾l. B Smart.

5.05 (7f 14yd) 1, **Coramento** (O J Orr, 9-1); 2, Finn Ironside (100-30); 3, Travis (100-30). 9 ran. 3½l, 1½l. R Craggs.

5.40 (6f) 1, **Asadjumeirah** (Ethan Tindall, 6-1); 2, Ridgemaster (8-1); 3, Desert Master (11-1). 13 ran. NR: Uncle Sam. 1l, 27½l. A Brittain.

Placepot: £26.20 **Quadpot: £16.30**

Wolverhampton

Going: Standard

2.00 (7f 36yd) 1, **Star Of Commala** (Molly Keegan-Price, 125-1); 2, Gilding The Lily (7-2); 3, Foxy Night (5-4 fav). 10 ran. nk, ½l. Jane Chapple-Hyam.

2.35 (7f 36yd) 1, **Espanita** (Oliver Stammers, 20-1); 2, Merry (14-1); 3, Angels' Share (100-30). 10 ran. NR: Piazza. nk, 2l. C Johnston.

3.10 (7f 36yd) 1, **Carnival Of Light** (Oliver Stammers, 11-4 fav); 2, Inside Story (5-1); 3, Ghisa (9-2). 9 ran. nk, 3l. C Johnston.

3.45 (1m 142yd) 1, **Suggy** (Daniel Muscutt, 6-4); 2, Lightning Glory (100-30); 3, Always Blue (20-1). 9 ran. NR: Highland Shah. 2½l, 3¼l. C Hills.

4.20 (1m 4f 51yd) 1, **Roc De Fer** (L Morris, 1-4 fav); 2, Much (9-2); 3, Fans Favourite (12-1). 7 ran. 1½l, 5l. Sir Mark Prescott.

4.55 (6f 20yd) 1, **American Style** (Harry Davies, 2-1 fav); 2, Moving Force (33-1); 3, Angel Love (7-1). 10 ran. 2½l, 2l. K A Ryan.

5.25 (5f 21yd) 1, **Happier** (Jack Doughty, 7-4 fav); 2, Fancy Dancer (3-1); 3, Bust A Moon (50-1). 6 ran. 2l, 17½l. M Keighley.

Placepot: £24.80
Quadpot: £4.20

Bath

Going: Firm

5.35 (1m 6f) 1, **Belle Of Kt** (Miss Scarlett Dorricott, 2-1); 2, Sea Of Charm (9-2); 3, Fabled Spirit (17-2). 4 ran. ns, 1l. J S Moore.

6.08 (5f 160yd) 1, **Havana Gift** (Warren Fentiman, 2-1 fav); 2, Texas Crown (9-2); 3, Sheer Beauty (4-1). 7 ran. ½l, ½l. J & S Quinn.

6.43 (5f 160yd) 1, **Jackie Brown** (Finley Marsh, 15-8 fav); 2, Symbol of Hope (17-2); 3, Sisters In The Sky (9-1). 9 ran. ns, ns. A Wintle.

7.18 (5f 160yd) 1, **Honky Tonk Girl** (Mason Paetel, 5-6 fav); 2, Kodicall (3-1); 3, Elmfield (11-2). 6 ran. 2¼l, ¾l. Oliver Cole.

7.48 (5f 160yd) 1, **Nordic Glory** (Owen Lewis, 9-2); 2, Beerwah (100-30); 3, Candy Warhol (15-8 fav). 5 ran. ½l, 1½l. M J Attwater.

8.18 (1m 2f 37yd) 1, **Blue Hero** (Finley Marsh, 9-4); 2, Offiah's Boy (100-30); 3, All About George (13-2). 5 ran. NR: Hammal. nk, ½l. A Wintle.

Placepot: £140.90
Quadpot: £14.30

Musselburgh

Going: Good

5.45 (1m 5f) 1, **Sophiesticate** (Shay Farmer, 11-4); 2, Gemini Man (2-1); 3, Jedhi Knight (100-30). 9 ran. 3l, 4½l. R M Smith.

6.15 (7f 15yd) 1, **Gerry's Darling** (K Stott, 11-8 fav); 2, Hey Up Ronnie (6-4); 3, Nosey Book (17-2). 5 ran. 6½l, nk. Roger Fell.

6.50 (7f 15yd) 1, **Bluestone Lady** (Billy Garritty, 18-1); 2, Bigalo (5-2 fav); 3, Amantha (9-2). 7 ran. ½l, 47½l. Phillip Makin.

7.25 (5f 1yd) 1, **Francisco's Piece** (O McSweeney, 13-2); 2, Montezuma (9-4 fav); 3, Jer Batt (11-4). 5 ran. nk, ½l. A Keatley.

7.55 (7f 15yd) 1, **Monhammer** (Harry Burns, 3-1); 2, Misemerald (100-30); 3, Wait For It (11-4 fav). 7 ran. hd, 27½l. Miss L A Perratt.

8.25 (1m 7f 217yd) 1, **Inappropriate** (Greg Fairley, 10-3); 2, Arrange (4-1); 3, Cascade Hall (7-2). 6 ran. ¾l, 17½l. Ewan Whillans.

● Does not include 8.55 race

Newmarket

Going: Good to Firm

5.50 (6f) 1, **Sexy Chick** (R Havlin, 2-1); 2, National Honour (13-8 fav); 3, Hayate (13-2). 7 ran. 2l, ½l. R Spencer.

6.25 (1m 2f) 1, **Without Prejudice** (R Havlin, 3-1); 2, Aleatrix (1-3 fav); 3, Golden Island (20-1). 4 ran. 4½l, 7½l. J & T Gosden.

7.00 (6f) 1, **Spring Bloom** (N Callan, 13-8 fav); 2, Robert Anstruther (100-30); 3, Rebel Path (17-2). 10 ran. nk, ½l. J Butler.

7.32 (7f) 1, **Nikovo** (Rowan Scott, 3-1 fav); 2, Cherry Cobbler (14-1); 3, Exposure (4-1). 9 ran. 27½l, ½l. M Herrington.

8.02 (1m 4f) 1, **Society Girl** (Ashley Lewis, 11-8); 2, Sibling Rivelry (11-8); 3, Spinney (9-1). 4 ran. NR: Dance Time. ½l, 6½l. E Walker.

8.32 (1m) 1, **Drifts Away** (Ryan Kavanagh, 7-2); 2, Rising Force (7-1); 3, Born A Rebel (17-2). 7 ran. hd, ½l. T Kent.

Placepot: £80.00

Quadpot:£17.70

Inspirational or unhealthy — is Tour winner's weight loss really a problem?

Pauline Ferrand-Prévot starts her Yellow Jersey defence today facing a storm about shedding 4kg, says **Sean Russell**

SZYMON GRUCHALSKI/GETTY IMAGES

Ferrand-Prévot says training at altitude and sticking to a rigorous diet fuelled her 2025 Tour win

Tour de France Femmes

Stage one, Lausanne, 1pm-5.45pm today
TV: TNT Sports

When Pauline Ferrand-Prévot announced she was returning to road cycling last year, after four years focusing on the mountain bike, she did so with one aim in mind: to win the Tour de France Femmes. She managed it at her first attempt.

The Visma-Lease a Bike rider launched an attack on stage eight on the slopes of the Col du Madeleine and took a huge victory over Sarah Gigante, finishing 1min 45sec ahead of the Australian AG Insurance–Soudal rider. Ferrand-Prévot put on the Yellow Jersey that day and was wearing it when she won again the next day on the final stage into Châtel Les Portes du Soleil. After 1,169km of racing over nine days, the Frenchwoman won the Tour by 3min 42sec.

Almost immediately, the win was tinged with controversy. Marlen Reusser, the 34-year-old Swiss Movistar rider, said in an interview that she "secretly hoped [Ferrand-Prévot] wouldn't be successful".

Ferrand-Prévot, 34, is reported to have lost about 4kg from the spring to when she lined up at the Tour. It is thought she dropped from about 53kg to 49kg. Rather than racking up race days like her key rivals in the lead-up to the Tour, she spent time training at altitude in Andorra and stuck to a rigorous diet.

But riders such as Reusser — not only a respected figure in the peloton, who wore yellow during last year's Tour and is now the time-trial world champion, and also a qualified doctor, saw this as unhealthy and a bad example to young women. "Ferrand-Prévot has set a new standard," Reusser said. "When riders are this successful by becoming so thin, it puts pressure on all of us.

"My young team-mate asked me, 'Did you see? Ferrand-Prévot measures her body fat and then decides whether she's allowed to have breakfast.'"

Demi Vollering, perhaps the top rider in the peloton, also spoke on the issue. "I'm not built to be the lightest rider in the peloton," she said. "And I won't force my body to become something it isn't. Take care of yourselves. Ask questions. Trust your body."

Ferrand-Prévot said at the time: "I won because I work so hard and yeah, for sure, weight is one part of it, but it's not everything. It's not the more skinny [you are], the more you will perform. You have to keep power for nine days. Athletes are not healthy. You have to eat four gels or five gels per hour. This is, for me, nothing to do with being healthy. We are just pushing our body [to the limit] because it's our job and we need to be the best."

But is this just a double standard? After all there is no scepticism about the 2kg Tadej Pogacar shifts each year, from his spring classics campaign, when he is about 66kg, to the beginning of the Tour de France. Maxim Van Gils, the Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe rider, said before this year's Tour, when the Slovenian world champion blasted past him on a training ride, that he "thought he looked very thin", but that was it.

Remco Evenepoel, of Red Bull, took a very Ferrand-Prévot approach to this year's Tour, sitting out racing in the weeks leading up to the race to train at altitude. The Belgian rider, who would finish second at the Tour, confirmed he lost about 4kg — the same amount as Ferrand-Prévot, but a smaller proportion of his body weight (usually about 63kg). "We tackled the weight loss in a smart way," he said. "My weight has dropped, but the power has remained."

And yet no one in the media or peloton has said they secretly hoped Evenepoel wouldn't be successful. In fact, the Belgian's step up in form may force other riders to consider a similar run-up to the Tour as athletes seek to push the boundaries.

For women, there is a particular worry surrounding RED-S (relative energy deficiency in sport), where an athlete is chronically burning more calories than they are consuming. Symptoms of RED-S include extreme fatigue, missed periods and increased susceptibility to injury and to sickness. Although the syndrome is more commonly diagnosed in women, it also affects male athletes. Chris Boardman, the former Olympic champion, suffered from the condition and had to retire early from competitive cycling because of decreased bone density.

Women's cycling is growing rapidly and as more money and spectators flood in it is natural that athletes and teams will do all they can to win races and that the teams and riders will reach levels of professionalism increasingly in line with the men. This week, before her Tour defence begins, Ferrand-Prévot faced questions at a press conference and the issue of weight once again reared its head.

"It was quite a topic [last year]," she said. "I know what I did, I know it's for one event, it's not for ever. I was maybe not at my best at the beginning of the season, but I try to be at my best for the Tour and to be weight-ready is important. To have the best wattage [power] per kilogram is super-important, there's nothing new with that, and I try to do my job the best way possible."

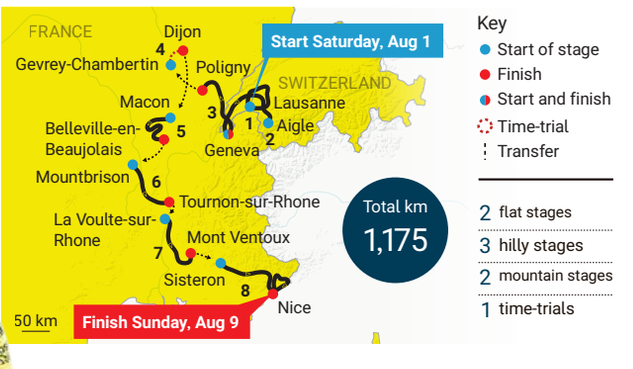
Ferrand-Prévot does not shy away from these questions and answers them with grace and unapologetically. "I'm race weight-ready," she said. "For sure I was not the same weight at the beginning of the season because this is a big goal for me, this Tour, and now I'm at the weight I can really perform … the preparation has been the same as last year so I'm the same weight and I'm just ready to race."

Ferrand-Prévot has always stated that her weight loss is temporary and controlled; that a nutritionist is involved. She is the same weight at any big target event and that goes for mountain biking too. When a journalist put a question to her about whether she was concerned it was setting a bad example to young fans, she replied: "The determination and commitment I can put into one event, one goal, I think it's something people can learn from, so I'm feeling good with that."

The Tour de France Femmes avec Zwift begins today in Lausanne, Switzerland, and will finish on August 9 in Nice. It is a hilly route with a 21km individual time-trial on stage four into Dijon (which Britain's 21-year-old time-trial champion, Zoe Backstedt, is taking aim at) and includes a debut in the women's race for the notorious Mont Ventoux (20.8km at a 7.7 per cent gradient) on stage seven, where the race may well be won or lost. Ferrand-Prévot is ready to take the fight to the likes of Reusser, Vollering, Kasia Niewiadoma-Phinney and Lorena Wiebes.

"I really like to know where I put my wheels, so I went [to Ventoux] a few times and did some recon. It's a hard climb… but I like it, it's very iconic also as a French person."

2026 Tour de France Femmes



Trade open seas for serene rivers

Save up to £450PP on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS PACKAGE

For all river cruises*

With Riviera Travel, you're covered

Which? Recommended Provider for 14 years

Unbeatable value, protected by our Quality Promise

feefo ★★★★★

DECEMBER 2025 Which? Recommended Provider ESCORTED TOURS

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Discover your new favourite destination

At Riviera Travel, we do the hard work to deliver adventures effortlessly. Our magnificent cruise collection has something for everyone, so there's no reason why you shouldn't treat yourself to that much deserved holiday.

Now you can save up to £450pp on select October and November 2026 river cruises^. Secure your place now to experience Europe in its golden season.

Enhance your holiday with these incredible offers

Travel from your local airport at no extra cost

Choose from the widest selection of dates and regional departures options and start your holiday the way you want to, at no extra cost.

Free drinks package on all European river cruise departures*

Request a brochure

Rhine Gorge & Cologne Discovery

RIVER CRUISE

FOUR DAYS
FROM
£849
PER PERSON

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS OR EUROSTAR†, PLUS HOTEL TRANSFERS

Sail through the Rhine Gorge, one of the most scenic stretches of river in the world, and visit two historic, yet distinctly different, German ports: Rüdesheim and Cologne. This holiday is ideal for those looking to sample a Riviera river cruise and travellers who want a short break exploring some of the most spectacular sights of Germany and the Rhine.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Three nights on board in a choice of cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's Dinner plus a free drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds vary)
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Two guided tours in Rüdesheim and Cologne
- Sail through the breathtaking Rhine Gorge

Departures November 2026 & March and November 2027

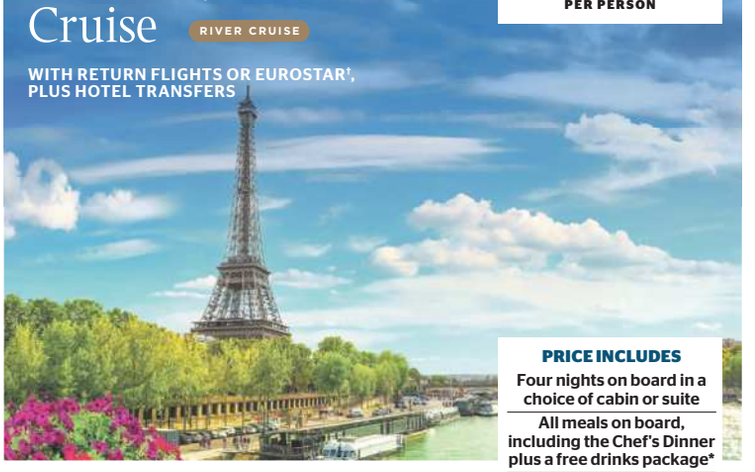
To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rct**

Paris, Rouen & Seine Discovery River Cruise

RIVER CRUISE

FIVE DAYS
FROM
£1,199
PER PERSON

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS OR EUROSTAR†, PLUS HOTEL TRANSFERS



Experience life on the River Seine during a scenic river cruise. Visit Vernon, a town that inspired famous artists and Paris, France's iconic capital city. Travelling on the recently refurbished MS Jane Austen, you'll enjoy first-class service on our five-star ship as we cruise along the Seine.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Four nights on board in a choice of cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's Dinner plus a free drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds vary)
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Guided tour of Rouen
- Guided tour of elegant Bizy Castle
- Guided tour of Paris

Departures March and October 2027

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rc7**

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). †Supplement may apply. ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

River Cruise Collection | **Save up to £450pp** on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

Rhine Cruise to Switzerland

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS OR EUROSTAR†, PLUS HOTEL TRANSFERS

EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2026 AND MAY TO OCTOBER 2027

Price Includes

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board (except one lunch) plus the Chef's Dinner plus an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

Your Included Experiences

- Six guided tours including atmospheric Koblenz, magical Rüdesheim, historic Speyer, charming Strasbourg, the magnificent Bernese Oberland with mountain railway and the stunning Black Forest and Freiburg
- Two visits to ancient Breisach and Lucerne
- Cruise through the spectacular Rhine Gorge

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcs**

The Blue Danube – Vienna, Budapest & Salzburg

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS PLUS TRANSFERS

EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES OCTOBER 2026 AND APRIL TO OCTOBER 2027

Price Includes

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board (except one lunch if choosing the Salzburg excursion), including the Chef's Dinner plus an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Return scheduled flights from a selection of regional airports
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

Your Included Experiences

- Seven guided tours including the neoclassical Esztergom Basilica, charming Bratislava, historic Dürnstein, remarkable Melk Abbey, baroque Linz or Salzburg, elegant Vienna and captivating Budapest
- Live classical quartet recital on board
- Hungarian folklore show on board

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcd**

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel *Partner*

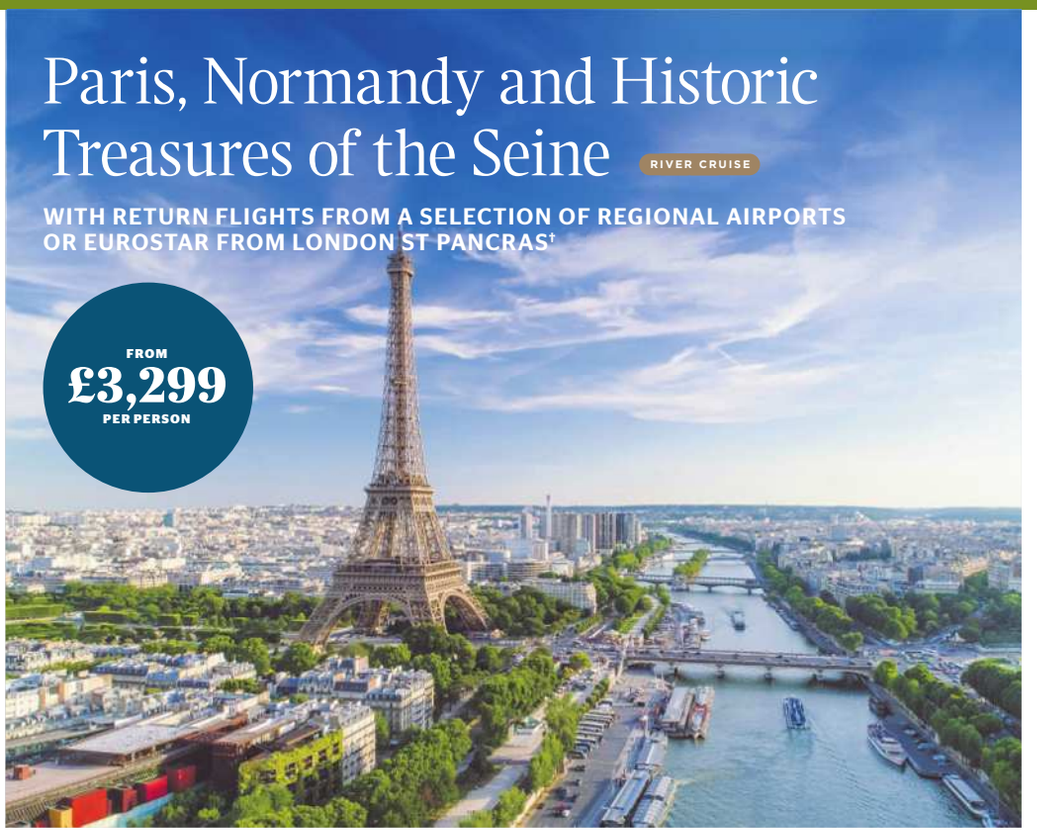
Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). †Supplement may apply. ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

River Cruise Collection | **Save up to £450pp** on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

Paris, Normandy and Historic Treasures of the Seine

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS OR EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS†



FROM **£3,299** PER PERSON

11 DAYS
DEPARTURES OCTOBER 2026 AND APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2027

Price Includes

- Ten nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board (except one lunch) including the Chef's dinner and an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Services of a Riviera Travel Cruise Director and Cruise Host

Your Included Experiences

- Seven guided tours including Paris, Auvers-sur-Oise, Rouen, the D-Day Normandy Beaches, Honfleur or the white cliffs of Étretat, Abbey Jumièges & Abbey St Wandrille and La Roche-Guyon
- Two visits including charming Caudebec-en-Caux and Claude Monet's house and garden
- Optional visit to the Palace of Versailles

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcv**

The Danube's Imperial Cities & Yuletide Markets

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS

SIX DAYS
FROM **£1,449** PER PERSON

Enjoy a guided tour of the fascinating Hungarian capital Budapest, imperial city of two halves straddling the mighty Danube, plus spectacular cruising along the famously dramatic Danube Bend in all its wintry splendour. Discover delightful Bratislava, Slovakia's fast emerging capital, on our guided tour then wander the atmospheric markets of its lovely baroque old town, beautifully restored to its former glory.

Departures November and December 2026 and 2027

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcw**

PRICE INCLUDES

- Five nights on board in a choice of cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's dinner, a free drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds vary)
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Three guided tours including captivating Budapest, charming Bratislava and elegant Vienna
- Three Christmas market visits including Budapest, Bratislava and Vienna

Enchanting Rhine & Yuletide Markets

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS OR EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS†

FIVE DAYS
FROM **£1,299** PER PERSON

Cruise through the world famous and dramatic Rhine Gorge before arriving in the renowned wine town of Rüdesheim. Spend the afternoon wandering the Christmas markets of this charming spot. Discover Bonn on a guided tour of Germany's historic former capital before arriving back in Cologne, where the rest of the day is free to discover one (or all) of its seven Christmas markets.

Departures December 2026 and 2027

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcx**

PRICE INCLUDES

- Four nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's Dinner, plus a free drinks package**
- Complimentary on-board tea and coffee and wifi (connection speeds vary)
- Services of a Riviera Travel Cruise Director and Cruise Host

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Two guided tours including romantic Rüdesheim and historic Bonn
- Visit to magnificent Cologne
- Three Christmas market visits including Rüdesheim, Bonn and Cologne

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). †Supplement may apply. ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions. Festive river cruises are not included in the offer.

River Cruise Collection | **Save up to £450pp** on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

Cruise the Heart of Europe

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS OR EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS†

15 DAYS FROM

£3,999

PER PERSON

WITH SO MUCH INCLUDED:

- 14 nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's Dinner plus a free drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Return flights or Eurostar from London St Pancrasˆ, plus transfers
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides
- Services of a Riviera Travel Cruise Director and Cruise Host

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES:

- 15 guided tours including Koblenz, Boppard, Rüdesheim, Mainz, Miltenberg, Wertheim, Würzburg, Bamberg, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Passau, Melk Abbey, Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest
- On-board classical quartet recital
- Cruise through the spectacular Rhine Gorge, along the Main-Danube canal and through the serene Valley

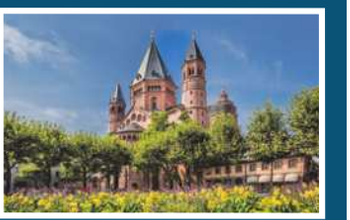
This 15-day tour takes you on an amazing journey from Cologne in the heart of the Rhine Valley to Vienna and finally Budapest on the banks of the Danube. Absorb some of Europe's most stunning scenery, such as the impressive Rhine Gorge, as well as picturesque medieval towns and cities along the way.

Departures September 2026 and May to September 2027

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rce**

Day 1 - Arrival in Cologne
Day 2 - Koblenz & Boppard

Day 3 - Rhine Gorge & Rüdesheim
Day 4 - Mainz



Day 5 - Miltenberg & Wertheim
Day 6 - Würzburg
Day 7 - Bamberg

Day 8 - Nuremberg
Day 9 - Regensburg
Day 10 - Passau
Day 11 - Melk

Day 12 - Vienna
Day 13 - Bratislava
Day 14 - Budapest

Day 15 - Return home

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3450, IATA 9127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). †Supplement may apply. ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

River Cruise Collection | **Save up to £450pp** on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES AUGUST TO OCTOBER 2026 AND MAY TO OCTOBER 2027

Price Includes

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's dinner and an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Services of a Riviera Travel Cruise Director and Cruise Host

Your Included Experiences

- Eight guided tours including charming Koblenz, beautiful Boppard, historic Mainz, romantic Heidelberg, elegant Strasbourg, medieval Colmar, magical Rüdesheim and fascinating Cologne
- Cruise through the magnificent Rhine Gorge

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rch**

Rhine, Strasbourg & Heidelberg

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS OR EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS†

FROM **£2,199** PER PERSON

Bruges, Medieval Flanders, Amsterdam & the Dutch Bulbfields

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS OR EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS^ PLUS TRANSFERS

FROM **£1,899** PER PERSON

EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES MARCH AND APRIL 2027

Price Includes

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, (except one lunch) including the Chef's Dinner plus an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

Your Included Experiences

- Classic Amsterdam canal cruise
- Three visits including the Airborne Museum and Commonwealth War Cemetery and spectacular Keukenhof
- Four guided tours including medieval Antwerp, gorgeous Ghent, historic Ypres and captivating Bruges

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rca**

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 91274140, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). †Supplement may apply. ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

River Cruise Collection | **Save up to £450pp** on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

Burgundy, River Rhône and Provence River Cruise

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS OR EUROSTAR FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS† PLUS TRANSFERS

FROM **£1,999** PER PERSON

EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES OCTOBER 2026 AND APRIL TO OCTOBER 2027

Price Includes

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's Dinner plus an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides
- Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host

Your Included Experiences

- Five guided tours including glorious Lyon, charming Beaune with wine tasting, historic Vienne, splendid Arles and intriguing Avignon
- Three visits including the magnificent Ardèche Gorges, the remarkable Pont du Gard and beautiful Tournon

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcr**

Highlights of the Douro Valley and Salamanca

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS FROM A SELECTION OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS PLUS TRANSFERS

FROM **£2,299** PER PERSON

EIGHT DAYS
DEPARTURES SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2026 AND APRIL TO OCTOBER 2027

Price Includes

- Seven nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite
- All meals on board, including the Chef's Dinner plus an included drinks package*
- Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)
- Return scheduled flights from a selection of regional airports
- Services of a Riviera Travel Cruise Director

Your Included Experiences

- Six visits and tours, including Mateus Palace Gardens, Castelo Rodrigo, Lamego and Porto.
- Two visits to local quintas, including a guided tour, meal and wine-tasting
- A traditional flamenco performance with lunch in the historic city of Salamanca
- Choice of included excursion to Vila Nova de Gaia or Guimarães

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcq**

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel *Partner*

Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 91274AO, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). †Supplement may apply. ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

River Cruise Collection | **Save up to £450pp** on select October and November 2026 river cruises^

Budapest to the Black Sea

RIVER CRUISE

WITH RETURN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS PLUS TRANSFERS

15 DAYS
DEPARTURES OCTOBER 2026 AND APRIL TO OCTOBER 2027

On this incredible journey through the Balkans, discover extraordinary scenery, and explore the architectural and cultural heritage of towns and cities that are steeped in history and tradition, once beyond the Iron Curtain.

Price Includes

- **14 nights on board in your choice of luxury cabin or suite**
- **All meals on board (except two lunches on full day excursions), the Chef's Dinner plus an included drinks package***
- **Complimentary on-board tea, coffee and wifi (connection speeds may vary)**
- **Return scheduled flights from a selection of regional airports**
- **Five-star service from an English-speaking crew and knowledgeable local guides**
- **Services of a Cruise Director and Cruise Host**

Your Included Experiences

- **Ten guided tours including Kalocsa, Belgrade, Pleven, Bucharest, Constanța, Novi Sad, Vukovar, Osijek and Budapest**
- **Scenic drive into the Pustza with an equestrian show**
- **Spectacular cruising through the magnificent Iron Gates Gorge and the heart of the Danube Delta**
- **Four guided visits including beautiful Veliko Tarnovo and enchanting Arbanasi, the Churches of Ivanovo, Belogradchik Rocks and Mesolithic Lepenski Vir**

To book, visit **thetimes.com/rtravel-rcc**

Day 1 – Arrival in Budapest
Arrive to your five-star cruise ship

Day 2 – Kalocsa and Paprika Museum or Puszta with equestrian farm
Discover Kalocsa and learn all about paprika, or drive into the Puszta with a visit to an equestrian farm.

Day 3 – Belgrade
Uncover the contrasting faces of Belgrade on a guided tour in the shadow of the Kalemegdan Fortress, then enjoy a folklore show.

Day 4 – Iron Gates Gorge
Experience the Iron Gates Gorge, a famously breathtaking stretch of the Danube.

Day 5 – Pleven
Discover Pleven's Panorama Museum and its old town on a guided tour and enjoy an on-board Bulgarian folk music show.

Day 6 – Bucharest
Enjoy a guided tour of Bucharest, 'Little Paris', with its tree-lined boulevards and elegant belle-époque villas.

Day 7 – Danube Delta
Experience the Danube Delta, Europe's second largest river delta and birdwatcher's paradise.

Day 8 – Constanța
Visit Constanța with its rich Greek and Roman legacy and landmark Art Nouveau casino.

Day 9 – Veliko Tarnovo, Arbanasi and Ivanovo
See Ruse and the churches of Ivanovo and Basarbovo, or visit Veliko Tarnovo, Arbanasi and Ivanovo.

Day 10 – Belogradchik
Moor in Vidin, home to the fortress of Baba Vidin, to visit the rock formations of Belogradchik.

Day 11 – Iron Gates, Lepinski Vir and Kapetan Mišin breg
Cruise the Iron Gates Gorge, visit Lepenski Vir, an important archaeological site and Kapetan Mišin breg.

Day 12 – Novi Sad
Explore on a guided tour of Novi Sad with its maze of underground tunnels. Tonight enjoy a performance of popular Serbian melodies.

Day 13 – Osijek and Vukovar, or Kopački Rit Nature Park
Enjoy guided tours of Vukovar and Osijek ports, or enjoy a boat ride in Kopački Rit Nature Park.

Day 14 – Budapest
Return to Budapest for a guided tour this afternoon, and a Hungarian folklore show as a fitting finale to your cruise.

Day 15 – Return home
It's time to say goodbye to your crew and start the journey home.

RIVIERA TRAVEL

ABTA No. V4744

Call now to book

0808 258 6755 thetimes.com/rtravel

TIMES Travel Partner

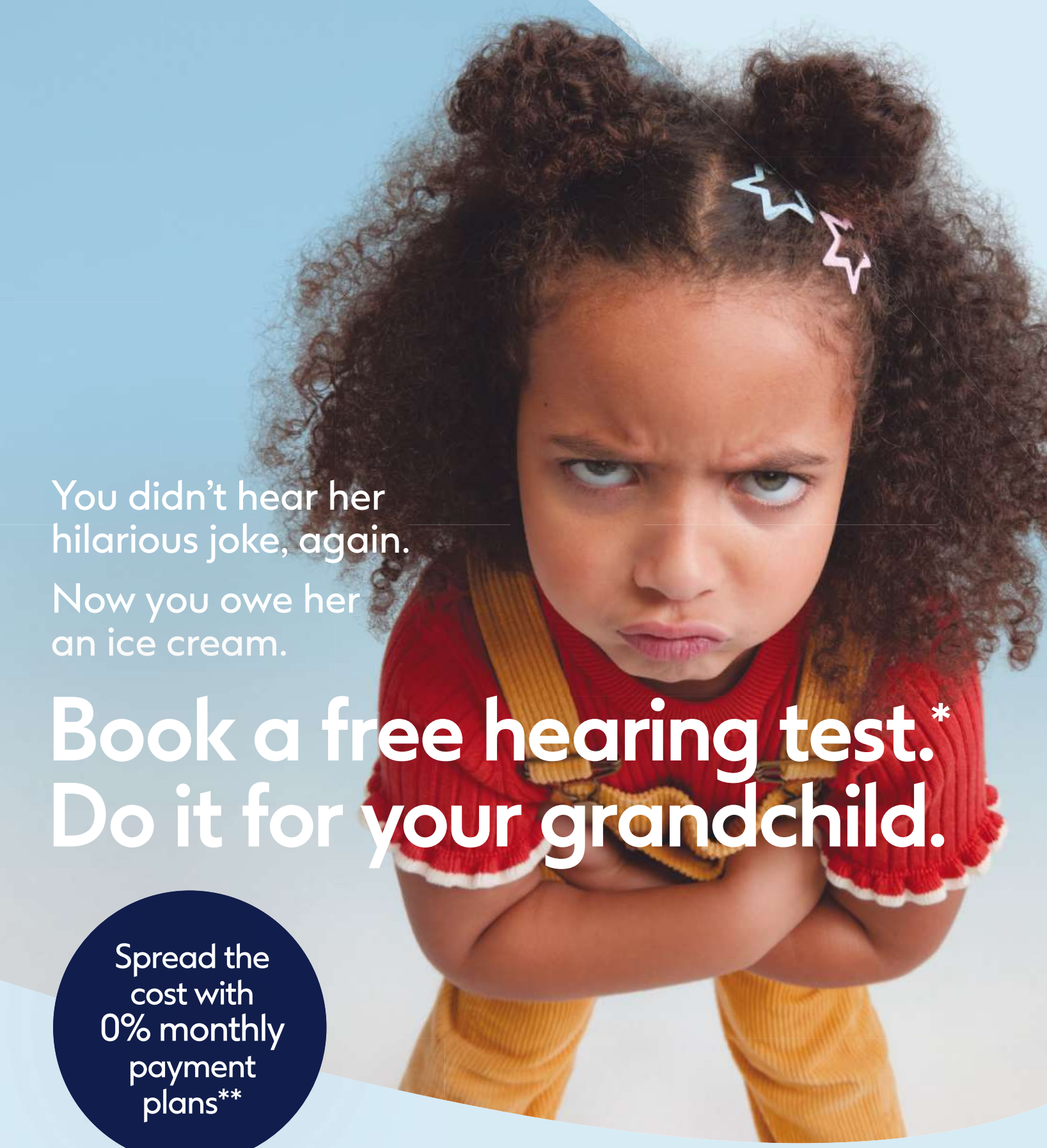
Prices are per person, based on two sharing and are correct at time of print. Single cabins are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. All holidays are subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Tours Ltd, ABTA V.4744, ATOL 3430, IATA 91127440, a company wholly independent of News UK. Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1SP. Visit the website for full t&cs. *Free all-inclusive drinks includes unlimited quantity of drinks from 10am to midnight while on board (selected drinks available). ^Save up to £450pp on select Riviera Travel European river cruises departing on selected dates. Valid on new bookings made between July 8 and August 26, 2026. The saving has already been applied. May be combined with other promotions. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

THE TIMES
MAGAZINE
01.08.26

WELCOME TO THE NEW LADS' WEEKEND

White robes, dad bods, no drunks allowed

By Sathnam Sanghera



You didn't hear her hilarious joke, again.

Now you owe her an ice cream.

Book a free hearing test.* Do it for your grandchild.

Spread the cost with 0% monthly payment plans**

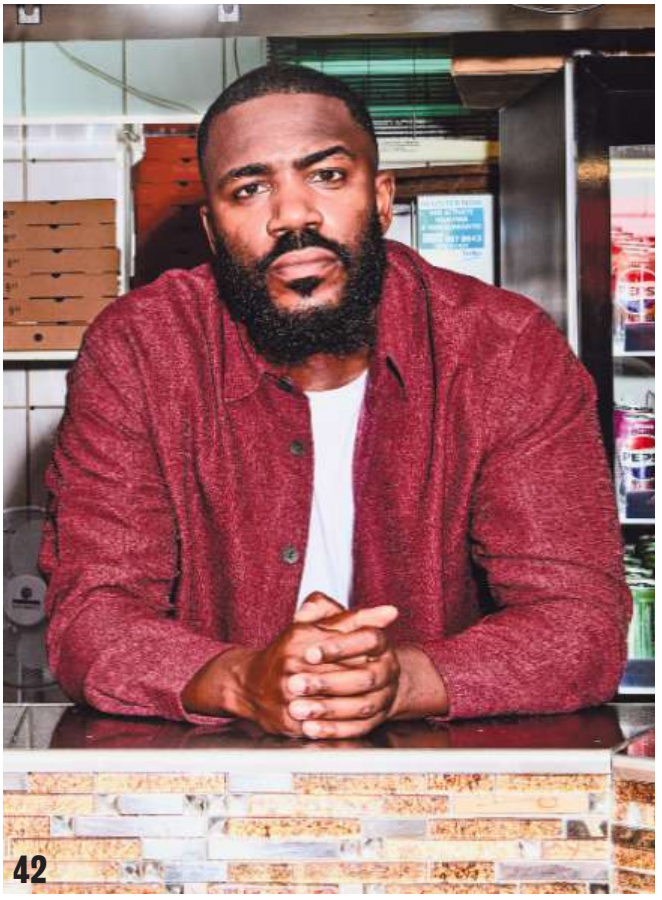
Visit **bootshearingcare.com** or call **0345 200 7052†**

*Over 18s and Hearingcare stores only. ** Requires minimum 10% deposit. Boots Hearingcare is a credit broker, introducing credit provided by Novuna Personal Finance. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Subject to acceptance, terms and conditions apply. †Local call rates apply, mobiles may vary.

Boots Hearingcare
With you. For life.

01.08.26

8


42

5 Caitlin Moran There are dead trees everywhere. They're trying to tell us something. **7 What I've learnt** Making jokes about being Chinese makes people nervous, says Phil Wang. **8 'Our supermodel lives were insane'** Helena Christensen on what she and her fellow supers do now. **14 Cover story: Men's health special My midlife lads' weekend** Sathnam Sanghera and friends forgo the pub, and check in to a wellness retreat. **20 A new approach to men's mental health** Dr Peter Meades has devised a strategy for men who feel uncomfortable asking for help. **27 Eat!** The best broad bean recipes for summer. Plus, easy Greek classics. **38 'Doctors ignored my pain. Now I have terminal cancer at 41'** When Haelwyn Adams was finally listened to it was too late. **42 Mo Gilligan's fried chicken challenge** The comedian investigates the £12 million industry – and eats the fast-food favourite every day for a month, with worrying results. **48 To the manor born** Lady Violet Manners, the high society party girl, has finally settled down. **52 Giles Coren reviews** Beefy's by Lord Botham, Southampton. **58 Beta male: Robert Crampton** Do men have more me-time than women? It's debatable.

FAB FIVE: FROZEN YOGURT

HONEY RIPPLE, £3.50
Swap ice cream for this Greek-style yogurt with honey (waitrose.com)

YEO VALLEY STRAWBERRY FROZEN KEFIR, £4
High in protein (waitrose.com)

M&S VANILLA FRO-YO, £3.75
Smooth and creamy (ocado.com)

MANGO AND PASSION FRUIT, £2.85
Serve this as a tropical dessert (sainsburys.co.uk)

BLACK CHERRY FROZEN YOGURT SPLIT, £1.90
Light and fruity (shop.coop.co.uk)

CHOSEN BY HANNAH EVANS

EDITOR NICOLA JEAL **DEPUTY EDITOR** LOUISE FRANCE **ART DIRECTOR** CHRIS HITCHCOCK **ASSOCIATE EDITOR** JANE MULKERRINS **ASSISTANT EDITOR** TONY TURNBULL
FEATURES EDITOR MONIQUE RIVALLAND **COMMISSIONING EDITOR** GEORGINA ROBERTS **CHIEF SUB-EDITOR** CHRIS RILEY **DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR** PAUL REED
DEPUTY CHIEF SUB-EDITOR KEVIN GRANT **PICTURE EDITOR** ANNA BASSETT **DEPUTY PICTURE EDITOR** LUCY DALEY **CONTRIBUTING EDITOR** BRIDGET HARRISON

COVER: TOM JACKSON. THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES, TOM JACKSON

NOVOGRATZ
x
pooky
Available exclusively
at pooky.com

CAITLIN MORAN

The trees where I live are all dying. We're in the bad future now and my heart is breaking

I don't like to write sad things, and I *will* have found a way to be optimistic by the end, but, my God – the trees are dying so fast this year. So fast – and so many of them. Walking through London feels like New York in the early Eighties – incidents on every street corner. But it's not murder scenes you walk past. It's dead and dying trees. In some areas, one in ten have just... gone. Whole areas cordoned off.

Three weeks ago, there was a lightning storm. The next morning, a 30ft aspen stretched across the road, crushing the iron railings on the other side. Leaves all over the tarmac. A bird's nest on a car roof – an unexplained item in the bagging area. I passed one other, horizontal, in the park. And a third by the time I got to Waitrose. Going to Waitrose shouldn't feel like a trip through an illegal logging area in a rainforest. You shouldn't be counting splintered stumps when buying peas.

Every time I pass one of these dead trees, I feel like clutching a passer-by's lapels and shouting, "It's *started*! It's really here, now! This is like the bit in *War of the Worlds* where the train comes down the track, on fire. The trees are telling us something! This is big, wrong stuff!"

I don't understand why *everyone* isn't doing it. Maybe they haven't noticed it yet. But once you do – once your eyes shift focus – you can't stop seeing it. What was predicted has happened. We're in the bad future now.

I noticed the first one four years ago: the cherry tree by the park gate. Its pink blossom has always been the first sign winter was over. But that May, the tree stayed grey. As the rest of the world turned green, the cherry remained dry and dead – in the permanent underworld of winter.

Since then, it's been joined by the cherry over the road, the cherry at the top of the hill, the cherry in the garden of No 46. They were all fairly young trees, and cherries have famously shallow roots. They can't dig deep during a drought year and wait for better times. They are like the silver birches, which have *also* started dying. Long, white ghosts on their sides in every wood or haunting front gardens, dead – but too big to dig out.

Perhaps, though, the pretty cherries and birches are like vulnerable young women – they just *are* the ones you've heard have been murdered on the news.

ROBERT WILSON

How many trees have fallen or stand leafless and dead, like skeletons? The British landscape is emptying out

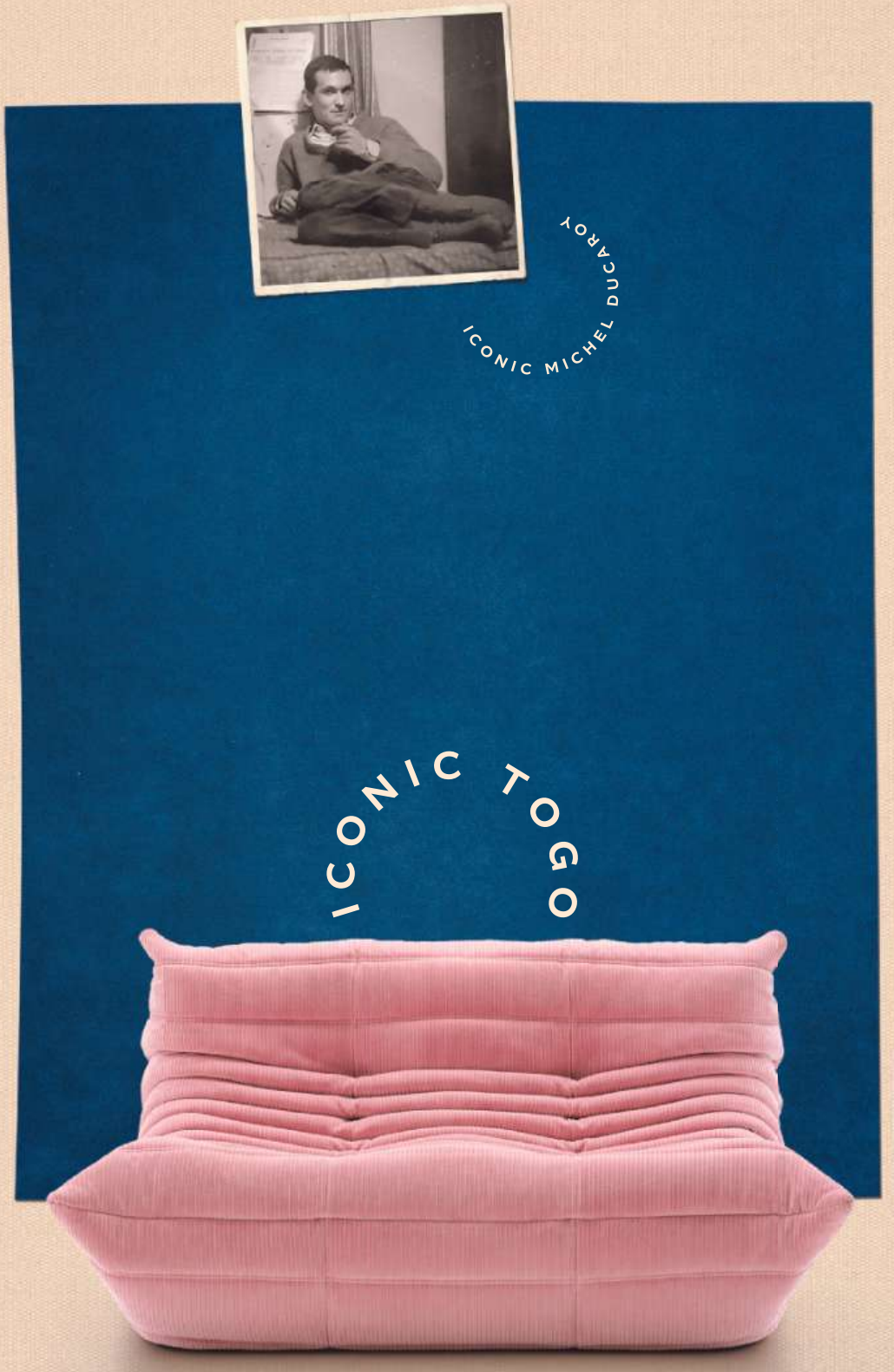
But when the oaks on Hampstead Heath started to go – splitting in half overnight, surrounded by a circle of alarmed dog-walkers at dawn – it felt like a more era-defining event. Like they'd started assassinating presidents now. These are 300-year-old oaks – older than the idea of presidents. Older than the idea of America. Britain was literally built on oaks. Our navy ships were oak and sailed to start an empire. Oak galls, crushed, made the ink that the Magna Carta and Shakespeare's sonnets were written in. All our historical hard and soft power is in oaks.

On top of a hill on the heath, I looked across at the tree line and could see how many gaps there are now. How many trees have either fallen or else stand leafless and dead, like skeletons. The British landscape is emptying out. Cherries, birches, oaks, ash, beeches, sycamore – all going. Or gone. I'm bemused by the people who fret how immigration has made Britain "unrecognisable", who seem hypersensitive to *that* change, but seem not to see *this* one, which is far more profound. From a plane, you cannot see a Polish deli or Somali shoe shop. But you can see empty woods and forests, whole city streets just tarmac, roofs and pavement, once the trees have gone.

Of course, everything changes. Things *do* die. We rarely cry over the dodo, these days. Only the old people miss elms. If this heat is permanent, we must plant new, unfamiliar forests, woods and city trees: gingko, olive, honey locust, Italian cypress. These trees will migrate north – from the Mediterranean to Macclesfield – and our grandchildren will think of them as normal, British trees. They will have childhood memories of climbing a golden rain tree in the way we have memories of climbing a hazel. They won't understand why we sometimes look around, confused, in woodland and murmur, "It used to look so different. *Smell* different. Sometimes, I dream about them." Our sadness won't be theirs.

Last week, my friend Hugo and I sat in a garden and heard the CRACK, rush, then thud of another tree falling. When we heard one fall back in January, we ran to find it. We stood next to it, shocked and we mourned it.

This time, we were silent for a moment – then, too sad to speak, we opened another bottle. ■



ligne roset®

depuis 1860

designed in France

made in France

What I've learnt Phil Wang

Comedian Phil Wang, 36, was born in Stoke-on-Trent but grew up in Malaysia, before moving to the UK at 16. He has appeared on television shows including Taskmaster, Live at the Apollo, QI, Would I Lie to You and Have I Got News for You, and acted in the 2023 film Wonka. He has released two Netflix stand-up comedy specials, and is about to go on tour. He lives in London.

PORTRAIT Diana Gomez

'I used to tell reasonably crass jokes about being Chinese. Now it makes audiences nervous'

INTERVIEW Georgina Roberts

I think my fear of getting things wrong and authority comes from being caned at school in Malaysia. Every day, there would be canings. I once got caned really hard across the thumb joint for humming a tune in music class – of all classes – because in the teacher's eyes I'd been disruptive. My therapist's eyes lit up when she heard about this. She thinks it explains a lot.

Audiences are more nervous than when I started out. I started stand-up around 2012, and when I joked about race and being Chinese, I could tell reasonably crass jokes about Chineseness, and people would find it funny. Now, I think those same jokes would make audiences nervous because they're not sure how to behave.

Dancing on a table with Timothée Chalamet was dreamlike. [They both appeared in the 2023 film *Wonka*.] On the final take, the table underneath me broke when I was dancing, and I came crashing down. The next day, I couldn't twist my forearm because I fractured the radial head in my elbow. The whole arm was purple. That was my first day on a movie set.

I have an embarrassingly humble rider. I can't eat before a show – I just have water and tea. My tour manager got the art of ordering a Deliveroo down to a T, so that the delivery coincided exactly with me finishing the show, so I'd walk off stage and he'd hand me a pad thai.

Nigel Farage is taking advantage of a difficult period in Britain's history. He was able to harness British frustrations about identity, the economy and migration in order to achieve Brexit. Now, he's using it to become prime minister, which is his next goal. He's very skilled at playing these games. Sometimes I feel like this is Farage's country and we're just living in it.

I nearly quit after my first term at Cambridge. Everyone there had been very good at school, so you suddenly realise you're not that smart. It turns your sense of self upside down. I did engineering, which had a very large workload. I took on all these extracurricular activities because I thought I had to – football, rowing, choir, comedy. I was getting burnt out. It was a very important lesson in pacing yourself.

I had imposter syndrome coming back as one of the main judges on Great British Menu. I was nervous that I'd get a score wrong. I'd give something a high score and the other chefs would give it a six, and I'd feel like an idiot. It's a jammy gig. You sit there all day and eat food, and you pass judgment on it. Those are all my favourite things to do – eat food and be judgmental.

One of the main reasons I wanted to do comedy was I didn't see any other east Asians doing it. Instantly, I was remarkable because I looked like no one else. I could be on a bill with a lot of other new acts, and at the end people would say, "I liked the Chinese guy. He was good." So it was a real advantage. Because of things like K-pop, east Asians have a cultural premium that we didn't have ten years ago.

Anti-immigrant demonstrations are frightening. But I'm reasonably sanguine about it, because these demonstrations are condemned by the political establishment. I still think of the United Kingdom as the most successful multi-ethnic society on earth. There are very few countries where I could have come from Malaysia at 16, started a comedy career, leant into my foreignness and found success.

I was bad at dressing as a teenager. This was the time of T-shirts and cardigans with skinny jeans – terrible, disgusting. The worst thing was I had these little skinny glasses. I thought the smaller the glasses, the less likely anyone was to see that I had glasses, which was really flawed reasoning.

In Malaysia, people don't queue. It's survival of the fittest. When you live elsewhere you realise it is actually nice that British people queue. When my mum, who's British, was reintroduced to British driving etiquette, she was like, "Oh, I missed this." ■

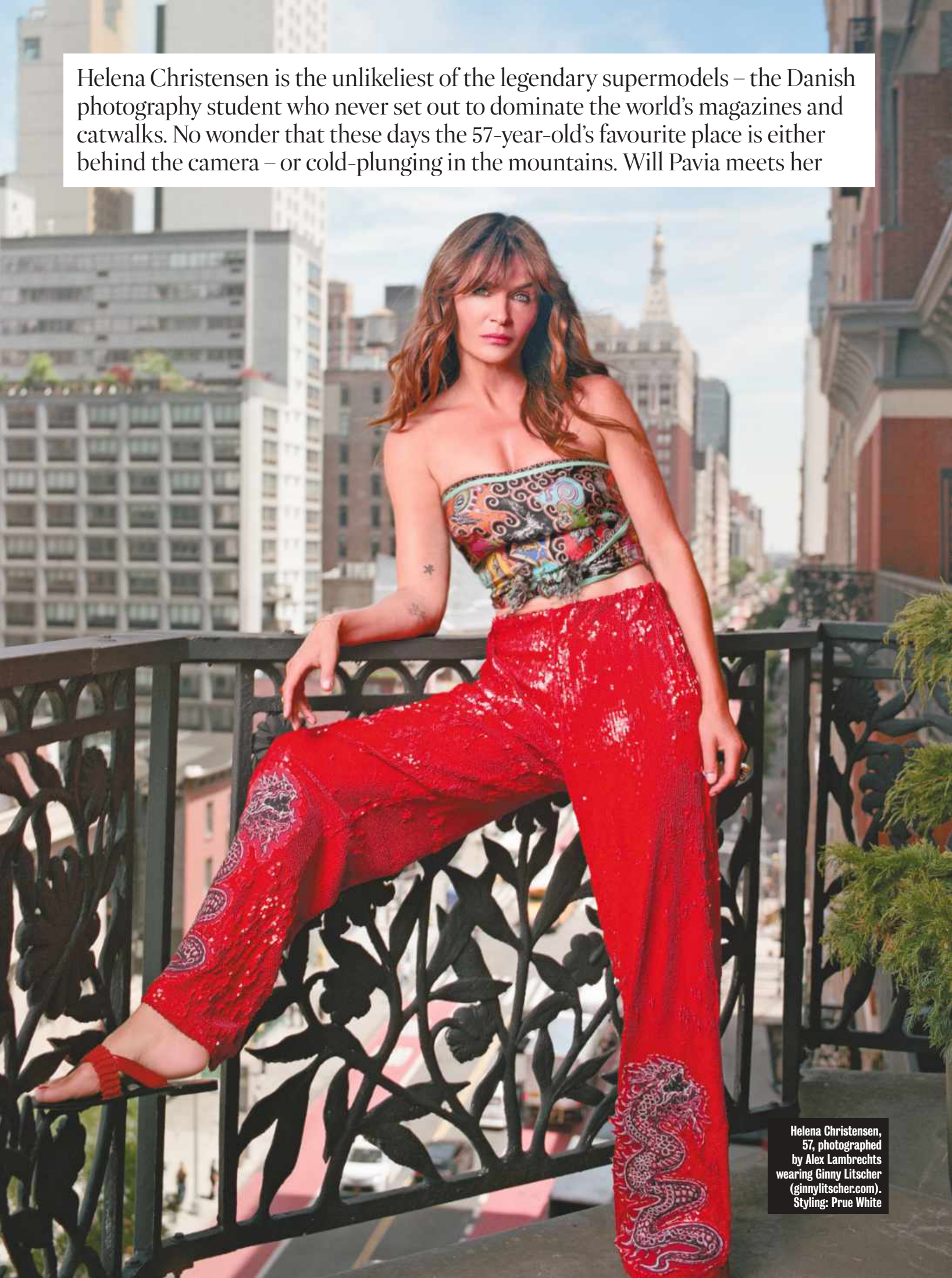
Phil Wang is going on an extended UK and Ireland tour with his new stand-up show, Uh Oh, *from September 11. Tickets at philwang.co.uk*

TIMES MEDIA LTD

‘CLAUDIA, NAOMI, CINDY, CHRISTY – WE SUPERMODELS UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. OUR LIVES WERE INSANE’

At this year’s Cannes Film Festival

Helena Christensen is the unlikeliest of the legendary supermodels – the Danish photography student who never set out to dominate the world's magazines and catwalks. No wonder that these days the 57-year-old's favourite place is either behind the camera – or cold-plunging in the mountains. Will Pavia meets her



Helena Christensen, 57, photographed by Alex Lambrechts wearing Ginny Litscher (ginnylitscher.com). Styling: Prue White

Some mornings in winter, Helena Christensen wakes in her cabin in the mountains with her dog at her side and prepares, mentally, to throw herself into a river.

"It's the different stages of where your mind goes," she says. "Waking up, knowing I'm now going to walk into this snowstorm and I'm going to get into the water. So already then you have decided to do something and, you know, once you've had that thought, you cannot change it. It cannot be undone."

We are in the café at the Hotel Chelsea in New York, seated in a booth, facing each other across a narrow table. Christensen, 57, is in a black dress with white polka dots and she sits very erect. I keep sinking into my banquette, or maybe my posture is not as good as hers. When she leans forward on her elbows, it feels as if she is looming over me, peering down with those rather mesmerising blue-green eyes. I feel like a rodent having tea with a kestrel.

Christensen's face is heart-shaped, with big round cheekbones that millions of people saw for the first time when she appeared in the sultry video for the Chris Isaak single *Wicked Game* in 1991. The cheekbones and the iridescent eyes were soon all over the shop and Christensen was proclaimed one of the supers, the magnificent seven, the women who were not supposed to get out of bed for less than $10,000, and certainly not if it was snowing.

More than 30 years have slid by since then and still we have not been able to look past them, these Helens of Troy. Cindy Crawford closed a Gucci show last month; Elle Macpherson is modelling underwear; Christy Turlington just shot a campaign with her daughter. Every so often they all reassemble, like the Avengers, to save the world from a lack of fabulousness. They are still striding, still having a better time than the rest of us. And hurling themselves into frozen ponds. At least, that is what Christensen is doing.

"Then you actually walk into the snowstorm and you make sure no little doubts creep in there," she says. Her cabin is in the Catskill Mountains, 100 miles north of New York. "You just keep very focused, very concentrated. You get down to the river and it's covered in ice. It's snowing and you literally have to take off all your clothes and be in your swimsuit."

Christensen sometimes uses a sharp tool to chisel through the ice.

The whole thing sounds terrible.

She pauses and considers my face. "You're, like, crying," she says.

Do carry on, I say.

"By that point you reach a stage where everything goes numb in your head," she says. "There is silence inside your mind. Complete and absolute silence."

"And then you get in and it is so f***ing freezing," Christensen says. "Everything stands still. There is no time. There is no sound. That's very weird today, because everything is so loud and your brain really messes with you these days."

What if she has some kind of medical event? Is anyone with her during these lovely morning bathing expeditions?

"You absolutely should have someone with you," Christensen says. "Do I always have someone with me? No. I'll be snowshoeing into the mountains with my dog, alone. I'll find a crazy river spot and I'll [say], great, this is where I'm going to lower myself, holding onto that branch."

I should mention the dog, an Australian shepherd named Kuma. Christensen posted a photograph on Instagram of the two of them a few years ago: Christensen with a coffee cup raised to her lips and Kuma beside her looking into the camera with large eyes, one brown, one blue. It gives the dog this slightly crazy but intense stare. It is canine blue steel. Where did she find this creature?

"My son found her," she says. "We always knew we wanted to get that dog. It was just a moment of: 'There she is.'"

Kuma "means bear in Japanese", Christensen says. "It also means c*** in Swahili."

It is not often you hear the c-word in America. Christensen says it quite breezily.

"Literally, if you look up Kuma in Swahili, it says with big letters: C***."

I suppose it's all right as long as she never goes to Kenya with the dog.

"I'll be yelling her name, 'C***', to everyone," she says, nodding.

I am told the animal in question made an appearance before I arrived, with Christensen's son, Mingus. Christensen lives not far away, in the West Village, but she is staying at the hotel to star in a campaign for Ginny Litscher, the Swiss artist and designer who creates huge dream-like canvases inhabited by wild animals and mythic creatures, and prints the images onto kaftans, dresses and swimsuits. It was Litscher, 42, who wanted to be at Hotel Chelsea, the grungy hangout for generations of artists, rock stars and poets, with a proprietor named Stanley Bard who accepted paintings in lieu of rent payments. The hotel reopened four years ago. It still has the artwork.

"I would say 80 per cent of the art [in the hotel] is something that really speaks to me," Christensen says. "The kind of art that I'm obsessed with. Really dark, weird, obscure art with many colours too. So I've been walking up and down the hallways to experience that and thinking, every time I pass a door, OK, what happened in here?'"

Like, is this where Sid Vicious killed his girlfriend?

"Or did he?" she says.

"It's not that I seek out darker forms of art. It's just that, I mean, if you saw what I have in my apartment, you would be like, 'OK, you're a little weird.'" She likes eastern European art and American folk art – stuff that is dark, with a morbid sense of humour. "They tap into something that is hidden inside of you, you know?" she says. "And there's a lot of darkness hidden inside all of us."

At her place in the Catskills, she likes to make her friends watch horror films. "I can't really do it," she says, "because they're all pussies." Then, seeing my eyes widen, she says, "You can find another word to put in there." She tries to maintain that the film they are watching is a psychological thriller, but as the bodies pile up, they revolt.

"I'm like, 'No, no, no, look at it with humour.' And there's someone, like, slashing. I'm like, 'It's funny.'"

Modelling for Versace in Milan, 1994

'Every year they say the supermodels are back. We were always here'

Christensen with her dog, Kuma

PREVIOUS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES. HAIR: DAWSON HIEGERT. MAKE-UP: MIZU. PRODUCTION: ROGUES ARTIST MANAGEMENT LTD. SCARF (WORN AS TOP) AND TROUSERS, GINNYLITSCHER.COM. RINGS, DINOSAURDESIGNS.CO.UK. THIS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK, HELENACHRISTENSEN/INSTAGRAM

With Kate Moss, Karen Mulder, Linda Evangelista and Karl Lagerfeld, 1995

With former partner Norman Reedus and their son, Mingus

Christensen's mother is from Peru. "My mother's life story is like a Gabriel García Márquez or Isabel Allende book," she says. Her grandmother was from the city of Cusco, high in a bowl of the Andes, and she was married several times. "There were many husbands and they all came from different continents," Christensen says. "My grandmother had four children from four continents."

Christensen's grandfather was "a very tall Croatian man, so that's why we all became tall in the family", she says. He was named Christopher, after Columbus. "If he hadn't been there, if he hadn't been part of our anatomical inheritance, then we would all have been very short, because we would have been like Cusqueños."

Cusqueños – natives of Cusco – tend to be "short and strong, because they live in the altitude, where they need more oxygen in their lungs", she says.

She would have been a strapping figure of a woman, no doubt, but you may not have seen her walking with Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer, unless she was carrying the two of them up the Inca Trail.

Christensen's grandmother and the Croatian Columbus had a daughter they named Elsa. Later, her grandmother married a Dane and had a son. When this boy was 10 and Elsa was 17, the two step-siblings and their mother boarded a cargo ship for Denmark, via Belgium. In a nightclub in Copenhagen called Las Vegas, Elsa saw a likely fellow at the edge of the dancefloor.

"She was dancing with a guy, but she was looking at my dad," Christensen says. "And then my dad came up and said, 'Can I have the next dance?' They got married and I came nine months later. My mother always says I was probably made on the wedding night."

Christensen was born on Christmas Day, 1968.

Her father, Fleming, was a typographer who produced posters for museums and galleries and the programmes for horse-racing events, at which he was an avid punter. Her mother got a job at a Danish airline. The family lived in a one-bedroom flat in Copenhagen in a building that had communal bathrooms. "The apartment my first boyfriend lived in also had shared toilets in the hallway. I think it was very common. I mean, it sounds like I grew up in the 18th century. I never think of that place being small, even though it could fit into these two booths," she says, gesturing at our nook and the one behind us.

Christensen and her sister, Anita, slept in bunks in the bedroom. Their Peruvian aunt, who lived with them, slept on a pull-out bed on the floor while their parents were on a fold-out bed in the living room. They went backpacking a lot, in Asia and South America.

"We were always travelling, so we were very rich in that way," she says. Thanks to her mother's job at the airline, they could get on flights that had free seats. "[We were] always waiting in the airports very anxiously, because you had to wait till the end to see if you got seats. Sometimes it would be like, 'OK, we have two.' My mum would go with my sister; I would stay with my dad. So I got all these experiences with him alone, because suddenly we were stuck somewhere and we had to wait."

Her ambition was to become a photographer or an archaeologist. Back home in Copenhagen, however, she was approached by several modelling agents. Two of them persuaded her to travel to Paris to "see what can happen", she says. "I met some incredible people and it started everything. I thought, if I'm lucky, a few months of this will be fun and then I can go back and study."

The photographer Herb Ritts cast her in the Chris Isaak's *Wicked Game* music video in 1991. It was shot in Hawaii, in black and white. White clouds boil in the sky, Christensen and Isaak cavort in the shallows and against the bole of a palm tree, grains of black sand on their faces.

'Parading up a podium with tons of people looking intensely at you? It's too weird'

"The photography that I was obsessed with, I now got to have that of myself," she says. "I felt so lucky. The female body, to me as a photographer, is one of the most exciting and unique things to shoot in life."

Christensen does not tend to think of anyone else when she is modelling. "You create a little story in your head. I just see the lens. I don't even really see the photographer. I look into this tiny little dark black hole and you kind of disappear in there like you would in a black hole," she says. It is the same on a catwalk. "You go to a little place in your head where you shut everything out," she says. "Because it's just too weird a thought to think about what is actually happening: that you are parading up and down a podium with a ton of people looking intensely at you. All you think and pray for is, please let it be an incredible song. That is 90 per cent of it. Then it's a delight. If it is a shitty song, then it is a super-lame situation."

She could tell she was a supermodel, in the Nineties, "in the sense that you were working a lot, you were exhausted and you were constantly travelling", she says. "You were also very grateful, but it was a lot of emotions at the same time."

But it was not as if she was constantly hearing about it on Instagram.

"I was lucky enough to be born when I was born, to experience the late Eighties as a teenager, the Nineties in my early twenties, and that there was no social media," she says. "That was the last decade in the history of the world, in the history of the universe. It's one of the things I'm most grateful for in my life."

And how was it to punch Gary Lineker? She was in a Walkers crisps advert that aired in 2002, emerging from a field of sunflowers in a white dress to deck Lineker for stealing her packet.

"Um, that was a jump," she says. She means my question, coming right after her speech about the end of history. "He was lovely. Really funny guy."

By then Christensen had her son, Mingus, with the actor Norman Reedus. She brought him with her sometimes on shoots. She and Reedus separated when their son was two, but they remain close. On the side of one of her hands there's a small tattoo of three little crosses, representing the two of them and their son.

"Me and my son and his dad all got these little crosses on one of my birthdays in Denmark. At 2am there was a tattoo artist at the party who suddenly decided to give tattoos to anyone who wanted and we made this together."

Mingus is tall, thanks to his Croatian great-grandfather, and has Christensen's cheekbones. "Right now he tends bar and then saves up money for making his music," she says.

Christensen never became an archaeologist, but she has a wide body ➡

of work as a photographer, shooting portraits, reportage and brand campaigns. She is quite active on Instagram, where she confines herself to posting her own photographs and videos.

She thinks of it as a diary, for an audience of one. "I never think of people actually looking at this," she says. "I think of my mum, because in the evening, let's say I put 19 pictures on that day, I can be sure that I will have 19 comments from my mum. Little happy faces, hearts, something funny in Spanish. So I do it for her because she gets to see it every day."

Also, she gets messages from her fellow supers: from Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington and Claudia Schiffer.

"When I'm in a city where one of them lives, I'll text and say, 'Do you want to have dinner?'" she says. "It's really nice because we grew up together. And then we all now have children who know each other. We understand each other like no one else. It was just an insane and wonderful life in many ways, that no one else has experienced at that level."

Are the supermodels back, does she think? She gives that one short shrift.

"They say that every year. We were always here, still working."

They still have a place in our minds.

"Exactly. In your minds. Not in ours. That's the way it was and is, and it's also very cool that it went like that – in people's minds, but not in our own. I am exactly the same way I was when I was 15. None of that had any effect on me in such a way that it changed who I am. I could not give a shit about the whole craze or obsession about it. I'm grateful for it, but it didn't affect me in any way."

I don't know if I will see Christensen again in person. She gave me her porridge recipe and some good advice on raising children in the city, but I think she was annoyed, at times, by some of my questions. She regards inquiries about age, and the fact that models who became super in the Nineties are still modelling in their late fifties, as pointless. She will say she hopes to live to 110. "That's my goal," she says. While maintaining the attitude of a 15-year-old girl "who looks at everything in awe", she says. "Like, you know, when nature changes in the spring. It's the biggest, craziest, most surrealistic show that's happening in front of your eyes. Every day I wake up and I'm amazed that I get to have a little furry creature next to me. You know? Kuma. The little c***!"

She leaves me with one great hope: that some day I will be out on a boring walk in the Catskill Mountains, snow crunching underfoot. Then, rounding a turn in some wooded river valley, I will happen upon a supermodel clinging to an overhanging bough, watched by a mad-looking dog as she drops into the freezing water, cursing like a sailor. ■

CINDY, NAOMI & CO: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

What happened to the runway icons, more than 30 years on? Georgina Roberts investigates

Cindy Crawford in 1990 and in 2025 | Linda Evangelista in 1991 and in 2025

GETTY IMAGES

CINDY CRAWFORD, 60

Still modelling? She retired from full-time modelling in 2000, but still returns to the runway – most recently when she closed the Gucci Resort 2027 show in May. She and her model daughter, Kaia Gerber, 24, are ambassadors for the luxury watch brand Omega, and both walked in an Off-White show in 2022.
What else does she do? The beauty brand she co-founded in 2004, Meaningful Beauty, nets more than $100 million a year according to Forbes, and the publication estimated her net worth as $225 million in 2021. She also has a furniture line, Cindy Crawford Home. She was an executive producer on the 2023 Apple TV documentary *The Super Models*.
Life She starred in a campaign for the activewear brand Vuori last year alongside her husband, the businessman Rande Gerber, and their two children, Kaia and Presley.

LINDA EVANGELISTA, 61

Still modelling? She stepped back from public life after a CoolSculpting treatment (which uses cold temperatures to reduce fat deposits) went wrong in 2015 and left her "brutally disfigured". Evangelista filed a lawsuit for $50 million in damages, which was settled out of court in 2022. She appeared on the cover of British Vogue that year with a scarf wrapped around her neck: "If I had known side-effects may include losing your livelihood and you'll end up so depressed that you hate yourself... I wouldn't have taken that risk." She returned to modelling the same year in a Fendi campaign and closed the brand's New York Fashion Week show.
What else does she do? She was photographed for a new edition of Louis Vuitton's *Rebonds* book (£125), which was published in June, with all sale proceeds going to Unicef.
Life She made headlines when she attended the Met Gala in 2024 for the first time in nearly a decade. The year before, she revealed she had undergone a double mastectomy after being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018. In *The Super Models*, she claimed her relationship with the former head of Elite Model Management Gérald Marie, to whom she was married to between 1987 and 1993, had been "abusive" (he denied the allegation). She has a 19-year-old son with the French fashion billionaire François-Henri Pinault, who is now married to the actress Salma Hayek.

CLAUDIA SCHIFFER, 55

Still modelling? Versace's SS24 show was the German supermodel's first runway since Versace's SS18 show six years earlier, where she closed the show alongside Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell, Carla Bruni and Helena Christensen.
What else does she do? This year she became an investor and an ambassador for "women's health and longevity" at Healf, a platform which has £100 million in revenue. With her husband, Sir Matthew Vaughn, she is the co-owner of Marv, the production company, whose film *Kingsman: The Secret Service* made more than $400 million worldwide. She was an executive producer of the company's 2024 spy thriller *Argylle*.

Elle Macpherson in 1995 and 2022

Carla Bruni in 1992 and 2026

Christy Turlington in 1991 and 2026

Naomi Campbell in 1996 and 2025

Life Last year Schiffer sat next to Sir Keir Starmer at the state banquet held for the German president at Windsor Castle. In 2002 she married Vaughn, the British film-maker who was knighted for services to the creative industries last year, meaning she is now also known as Lady Drummond (Vaughn is his professional name). They have three children.

ELLE MACPHERSON, 62

Still modelling? The Australian supermodel, who was known as "the Body", made headlines when she posed in her underwear for the Australian brand Bonds earlier this year, at 62.

Claudia Schiffer in 1990 and 2025

What else does she do? She has been a wellness entrepreneur since she founded WelleCo in 2014, a supplements company. She performed on the Spanish version of *The Masked Singer* this year, singing the Black Eyed Peas' *I Gotta Feeling* hidden inside a microphone costume.
Life In her 2024 memoir, she revealed she had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017, but chose not to undergo chemotherapy after surgery, against the advice of 32 doctors, and opted for a "holistic" approach. In 2018 she was photographed kissing the discredited former doctor Andrew Wakefield, who was struck off in 2010 after he made false claims linking the MMR vaccine and autism.

CARLA BRUNI, 58

Still modelling? In 2024 she made her Victoria's Secret Show runway debut at 56, wearing a black lace catsuit.
What else does she do? As a singer-songwriter, her 2003 debut album sold more than two million copies. She has released six more albums since and has 1.7 million monthly listeners on Spotify. She married Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of France, in 2008 and was first lady until his term ended in 2012.
Life Bruni and Sarkozy have a daughter, and she has a son from a previous relationship. Sarkozy was released from prison last year, three weeks into a five-year sentence for conspiring to fund his 2007 election campaign with money from the Libyan dictator Colonel Gaddafi. He was back in court in March this year for a new trial over alleged Libyan funding and told the court, "I am innocent." In 2024, it was reported that Bruni had been charged on suspicion of involvement in witness tampering, which she denied.

CHRISTY TURLINGTON, 57

Still modelling? She has starred in several campaigns with her 22-year-old daughter Grace in matching outfits, most recently for the athleisure brand Calia in April. She also closed the Ralph Lauren SS25 show with Naomi Campbell, starred in Ferragamo's SS26 campaign and was named a global ambassador for Lancôme this year.
What else does she do? She was an executive producer on *The Super Models*. In the series, she spoke about doing a shoot at 17 with the late fashion photographer Patrick Demarchelier (who was accused of misconduct during MeToo) where she was persuaded to reveal her breasts. "Patrick didn't give me the creeps per se, but I do remember being like, 'Oh my gosh, I shouldn't be doing this,'" she said. She founded the non-profit Every Mother Counts in 2010, which aims to make pregnancy and childbirth safe worldwide, after she had a postpartum haemorrhage after giving birth.
Life She is married to the actor and film-maker Edward Burns. They have two children.

NAOMI CAMPBELL, 56

Still modelling? She opened Richard Quinn's SS26 show at London Fashion Week and walked in Givenchy's SS26 show at Paris Fashion Week. Last year she starred in Burberry's Christmas campaign alongside the actors Jennifer Saunders and Ncuti Gatwa.
What else does she do? She collaborated with the Victoria & Albert Museum on a 2024 exhibition that celebrated her 40-year career. *Naomi: In Fashion* featured pieces from her wardrobe, including the outfit she wore on an aircraft during the pandemic: a Burberry cape over a hazmat suit. She is a brand ambassador for Boss.
Life In 2024 she was given a five-year ban on being a charity trustee after an inquiry into her former charity Fashion For Relief found that some funds were spent on hotels and spa treatments. In June she gave evidence at an appeal hearing to overturn the ban. She became a mother in her fifties, having two children born via a surrogate, and posed on the cover of British Vogue with her daughter in 2022.

MEN'S HEALTH SPECIAL

WHY THREE MIDDLE-AGED MEN SWAPPED THE PUB FOR A HI-TECH HEALTH SPA

Sathnam Sanghera and his two best friends have a combined age of 150 and a long list of midlife ailments. Will they finally learn to take their bodies seriously – at a luxury wellness retreat?

Sathnam Sanghera (centre) with Dave (left) and Lachlan at the Zem Wellness Clinic, Altea, Spain, photographed by Tom Jackson

I am sitting with two of my best friends in Wetherspoons at Gatwick Airport, at the height of July, waiting to board an easyJet flight to Alicante. Our fellow tourists seem to have got sunburnt by way of preparation. Every other diner, including a concerning number of teenagers who surely should be at school, is wolfing down a large full breakfast. And while it's only 11 in the morning, lager is being downed like water.

Not that Dave, who I know from school, or Lachlan, who I know from college, or I, are partaking. We were never these kinds of lads even as teenagers: at school Dave (a senior executive for a leading coffee brand) and I bonded over discussions of politics and music; the last time (artist, writer and broadcaster) Lachlan and I went away together, museums were part of the itinerary. Now, as we reach a combined age of 150, daytime drinking is less common than a night uninterrupted by multiple trips to the toilet.

Moreover, we are not off to large it in Benidorm. Instead, we are going to the ZEM Wellness Clinic Altea, a longevity spa in the hills of Altea in Spain, which offers everything from gut health reboots to weight management. Once there, we are promised a three-day programme that will give us a "comprehensive recalibration of physical and mental balance". And while the travellers around us partake of Stella, we follow orders to stick to "quality water and herbal teas". Or, at least, the closest thing this pub has to them: cranberry juice and disgusting decaffeinated tea.

It would be natural to find the trip comical, and we do. It's incongruous that three middle-aged, middle-class men who usually meet for curries are about to embark on activities usually reserved for pop stars, actors and elite athletes keen to reverse the cellular toll of 36-date stadium tours, gruelling filming schedules and/or sporting injuries. It causes schoolboy hilarity (and if you meet at school your shared humour remains stuck in this way), that the last time the spa was written about in The Times, it was in relation to a piece about vagina enhancement (penis enhancements are also provided at the clinic). Meanwhile, our respective wives have been making jokes about mankinis and dad bods, and Lachlan has packed some emergency Monster Munch in his luggage to mitigate the prospect of ruthlessly calorie-counted menus.

We continue to struggle to take things entirely seriously once we arrive. It's a struggle to keep a straight face as elegant Spanish nurses make earnest enquiries about our respective bowel movements. We find it more amusing than we probably should to be offered the option of having certain treatments delivered rectally. And we can't cope with how different

TOM JACKSON, ZEM WELLNESS CLINIC ALTEA

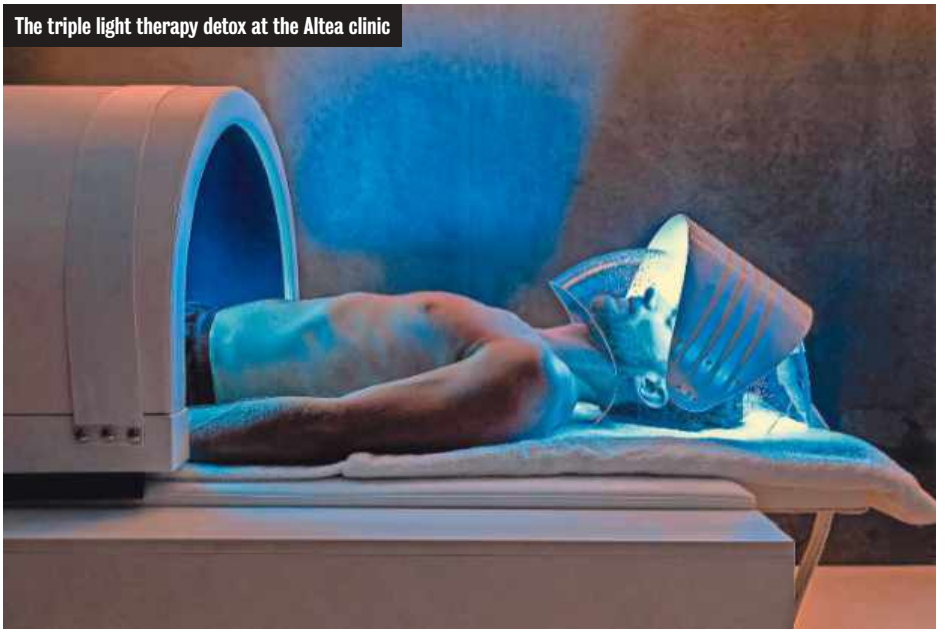
the restaurant is from the curry houses we normally meet in: every recipe is explained at great length; nothing is quite what it seems (burritos made from tofu, coffees brewed from mushrooms, mango chunks which reveal themselves to be roundels of pumpkin); and every meal starts with a "functional digestive beverage", which looks like an alcoholic shot but is very much not an alcoholic shot.

Then there is the sheer ludicrous sumptuousness of the £130 million facility, which is both the most lavish hotel I've stayed in and the most extravagant hospital I have ever visited, set up by an entrepreneurial family that operates both. It offers 42 treatment rooms (and 85 rooms and 10 suites), 7 types of showers (including those that simulate "vitalising rain", "misty rain" and snow), 4 types of sauna (including Finnish, steam and infrared), almost as many types of ice room (including one that is basically like being on the set of *Last Christmas*), miles of marble and mosaics (even in the lifts!), an unnecessary number of outdoor pools (three!), an organic farm (which supplies almost everything in the restaurant), and helipads (two!).

It's a long way from the Premier Inns that have been my home on my book tour, and our trip, existing in the grey area between a lads' weekend, a spa weekend for the girls and a trip to A&E, feels daft. But then we have our respective medicals and personal training sessions and... everything changes. A workout routine that would have, just last year, barely provoked a sweat leaves me gasping on the floor of my hotel suite, carpeted by the

A TREATMENT INVOLVING HIGH-PRESSURE WATER JETS REMINDS US OF THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION

The triple light therapy detox at the Altea clinic



IT TURNS OUT MY METABOLIC AGE IS 64. AND LACHLAN HAS SUCH LOW MUSCLE MASS HE MIGHT VANISH

way with something more comfortable than my duvet at home. A body scan reveals I have a body BMI value of 28.1, and that according to "the SEEDO 2000 Criterion", I am considered "overweight II". Furthermore, my metabolic age is 64, some 15 years more than my actual age. Lachlan does better: he has a metabolic age of 35, 15 years below his actual age, but has such chronically low muscle mass that he's in danger of disappearing completely. Meanwhile Dave aces many of his medicals, but is dehydrated and sleep-deprived.

In short: it turns out we actually need this trip. After all, Lachlan has only just emerged from long Covid. Dave is recovering from a gastric surgical procedure called a fundoplication, and has recently had months of sustaining himself on soup. As for me, it feels like my body has been giving out on me, with a year of exhaustion having recently been diagnosed as an autonomic disorder. It's a surreal story that started with me contracting the superbug MRSA in a hot yoga studio, and then the hot yoga studio (unrelatedly) burning down, but it's perhaps easier just to say that I used to run 10 to 15 miles a week, and do hot yoga three times a week, but now, if I walk more than four miles, I have to go to bed for an hour.

All three of us are on the precipice of deep middle age: we have each turned or are about to turn 50. And it is sometimes said that this is when abstract health problems become real, while my doctor calls the 45-55 demographic "sniper's alley". Though I would describe 50 as the age by which most of us have woken up, at least once, in a middle-of-the-night panic, thinking we are dying, even if it actually turns out to be a grass allergy (Lachlan), a reflux-induced throat spasm (David), or a vestibular migraine (me).

By day two, our approach to the medical spa has transformed. Lachlan is asking for extra kombucha with his breakfast. We make a ritual of going through all the hot and cold therapies in the extensive spa. We ask for extra treatments, including time in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber (which feels like being in a business-class airline seat, complete with the ear popping), a triple infrared, plasma, light therapy detox (which feels like being slowly toasted in a microwave), and ozonated saline, delivered intravenously (which makes our necks warm up).

We are uncertain about the science behind some of the treatments on offer, not least a machine that can apparently change your body shape, and a treatment involving high-pressure water jets, which reminds us of a scene from *The Shawshank Redemption*. But it's a privilege to have time to think about our health and it strikes me that middle-aged men everywhere would benefit from trips like this.

Industry figures suggest increasing numbers of men are frequenting spas – in the UK, one spa-breaks platform reported men rising from 25 per cent of its audience in 2018/19 to 40 per cent in 2023, while at ZEM, 38 per cent of guests are men, with the proportion growing. But, culturally, the spa weekend is still seen as a female enterprise, to such a degree that there is a chick flick coming out soon called *Spa Weekend* starring Isla Fisher, Leslie Mann, Anna Faris and Michelle Buteau ("Three friends go on a spa weekend that descends into chaos when their train-wreck friend joins them, leading to hilarious consequences").

If middle-aged men ever do anything together – and as I have written here before, they generally do not do so enough – they go golfing, cycling or on benders to Las Vegas. But spa trips, even of a cheaper variety, could save their lives. After all, middle age is a time of real risk. It is when men are forced to become aware of the prostate – the PSA test being a simple blood test that too many men avoid. Testosterone drops at a rate of around 1 to 2 per cent annually from the mid-thirties, muscle mass begins to decline by 3 to 8 per cent a decade after 30, while your metabolism also changes so that the diet that once worked now does not.

The 45-55 demographic is prime ➨

time for sudden cardiovascular events. One of my most vivid memories as a journalist is of watching an acclaimed heart surgeon perform an emergency heart bypass on a man of my current age who had heart attack while on an intense cycle ride with friends. Which, in my experience, is what too many men do: they neglect their health, but then have intense bursts of activity, like they did in their twenties, expecting their bodies to cope like they did in their twenties.

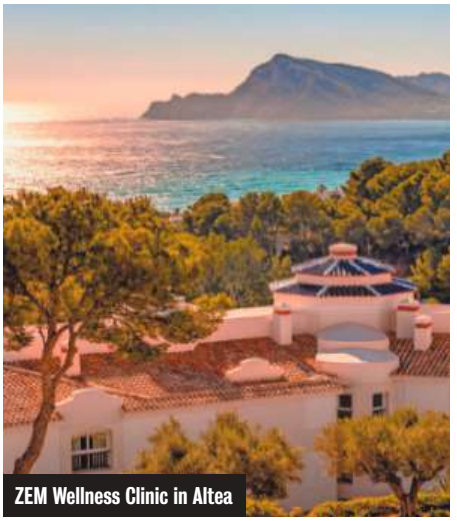
At the same time as suddenly facing all these health challenges, middle-aged men are notoriously poor at seeking help. In the UK, according to a study from 2013, men visit their GP some 32 per cent less frequently than women. Men are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with conditions like cancer or cardiovascular issues at a later, less treatable stage simply because they delayed that first appointment. Let's face it, men generally only ask for help when they are forced to do so, or shocked into doing so. In my experience, this usually happens when a partner or spouse forces them to do so, or if a friend or acquaintance dies. By then, it can often be too late.

Why are blokes like this? Too often, they are accused of being pig-headed, cowardly, ignorant, careless. But part of the problem is surely that men often don't have the vocabulary for health. Take the three of us, for example. We are not thick: we have three Cambridge degrees and nine book publications between us. I wouldn't say it to their faces, but Lachlan is the most creative person I have ever met, and Dave one of the smartest. Nevertheless, Lachlan has been making jokes about my rotting brain ever since I contracted a brain parasite in Mexico in my early twenties. In return, I may have been mocking Lachlan for being a consumptive child for a decade or two now, after he got pneumonia at university.

Meanwhile, our cryotherapy treatment, which presumably gets its name from its requirement for you to stand in an industrial-standard fridge until you cry, leads to jokes about bits falling off our dad bods. Laughter is useful, of course, and too much of the conversation around "wellness" is humourless, but banter can stand in the way of getting help.

Second, if middle-aged men are reluctant to seek help, it is also because we are exhausted. Women are pushed to the brink by the responsibilities of middle age, but men are too. Between the three of us we are currently juggling multiple children and young dependents, intense jobs, ageing parents, petty neighbours, family health crises, massive mortgages, bereavements and a bevy of neurotic pets. All of these pressures are increasing just at the point at which our health is not what

WE ARE CONVERTS, EVEN IF WE DO DEVOUR LACHLAN'S MONSTER MUNCH ON THE FINAL NIGHT



ZEM Wellness Clinic in Altea

it is was. In short, we are exhausted, time-poor and constantly firefighting. A friend recently responded to an account of woes with the canny observation that I didn't have "long MRSA", as one doctor had put it, but "long M6", from spending half my life firefighting crises between London and my family home in the West Midlands.

Third, men don't have the same gateway to health as women. Which is not to suggest that women have it easy. Far from it: there is lots of evidence that women face entrenched institutional disadvantages in health systems globally. This year my family lost my beloved sister-in-law, Ruky, at the age of just 53 to ovarian cancer, after her symptoms were dismissed for years for more minor things. But it is a fact that women are routinely pulled into the healthcare system via contraception, cervical screenings and pregnancy. They are forced to learn how to navigate GPs, discuss their bodies and manage preventative care, while the beauty industry encourages them to at least think about their bodies. Men have no such gateways. Some blokes see no doctor between their childhood immunisations and their first major midlife health scare.

My wife had glanced over the health spa menu, and, lingering over the hair treatment and the skin consultations, had remarked that the experience was wasted on us. She had a point, but in some ways we needed it more. Men would benefit from a healthcare bridge between never seeing a doctor and getting sick, and a trip to a medical spa, or a more conventional spa, might be it. You might think it is absurd that the super-rich come to places like ZEM to fight the inevitability of ageing with things like plasma renewal ("designed for individuals who refuse to accept the limitations of conventional ageing"), but everyone should have access to the unhurried medicals they provide, and personal training sessions aimed not at the hyper-fit, but at people who are slow, broken and recovering.

I find the trip restorative in a way I have not found any trip before. The only thing I can compare it to is a private hospital stay for an allergic reaction, paid for by medical insurance in my twenties. It felt like my first true holiday as an adult, in that my work and family were obliged to be sympathetic and to leave me alone; and I had someone enquiring about my wellbeing and bowel movements every 30 minutes.

It helps that ZEM is not as uptight as some other equivalent establishments. You might have read about clinics where guests on deep gut-reset programmes are given a single piece of rock-hard bread and a small bowl of clear broth for lunch, and instructed to chew each mouthful exactly 30 to 40 times until it becomes completely liquefied by saliva before swallowing. But at ZEM Dave gets a coffee when he explains that caffeine withdrawal is giving him a migraine, they provide us with an all too necessary beer each to help us through the England semi-final, and the manager shows us a vineyard where they make their own wine. They deny they do this officially, but the Spanish know how to live.

It means we return with realistic advice and tips for better health, rather than unrealistic expectations of a total lifestyle change. Which doesn't mean we suddenly become earnest about it. I make the mistake of mentioning to Dave that I am feeling better and he congratulates me for now only being "overweight I" on "the SEEDO 2000 Criterion", rather than "overweight II". In return, I may have suggested that Dave return for the ZEM Dermo-Aesthetic facial boost. And Lachlan's Monster Munch gets consumed in something of a frenzy on our final night. But I subscribe to a local gym before I leave the clinic. Dave resists a Twix in the car. And without it even discussed, we avoid the Wetherspoons in Alicante airport. ■

The three-night ZEM Essential programme at ZEM Wellness Clinic Altea starts from £4,200 full board including accommodation in a deluxe room (zemaltea.com)

TZEM WELLNESS CLINIC ALTEA

THE DIFFERENCE IS

NEVILLE JOHNSON

Home offices Bedrooms Libraries Living spaces

Request our brochure **nevillejohnson.co.uk** 0161 873 8333

MEN'S HEALTH SPECIAL

THE MALE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS – AND THE THERAPIST WHO HAS THE ANSWERS

The psychotherapist Dr Peter Meades has worked with men for over 25 years. Now he's written a self-help book for the silent majority – who need help but don't know how to ask for it. Interview by Alice Thomson

Peter Meades photographed by Tim Jobling in his Harley Street consulting room. Styling: Susie Lethbridge

Sleep, as nature intended

Since 1999 we've pioneered the use of natural fibres to create the most comfortable beds, mattresses and bedding at our workshops on the banks of the river Exe in Devon.

These natural materials – organic coconut fibre, natural latex and organic wool – are simply the best things to sleep on. They're free of harmful chemicals, they're longer lasting and they're breathable, allowing your body to regulate its temperature for the healthiest, most restorative night's sleep.

Because at the end of the day, nature knows rest.

organic. local. sustainable.

THE KING'S AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE 2026 SUSTAINABILITY

Certified B Corporation

naturalmat®

London | Devon | Knutsford | Cotswolds | Dorking

'Am I gone too far?/ Did I fall too hard?/ Am I in too deep to see the surface any more?/ Should I even try if I'll just spew another lie?/ If you ask me how I'm doing, I'll just fake another smile." The lyrics to an obscure TikTok song, *I'm Fine (No Really)*, go round my head as I enter Dr Peter Meades's consulting room on Harley Street, London.

I know the statistics about men and mental health: how they struggle to ask for help when they're floundering, that suicide is the main cause of death for men between 18 and 50, and men are three times more likely to take their own lives than women. They are also less likely to seek out professional advice than women, making up only 36 per cent of referrals to NHS talking therapies.

Older generations are often ashamed to admit their worries, while too many young people are overwhelmed by anxiety, feeling they have lost their sense of purpose and position in the world. This is not about toxic masculinity but a crisis of confidence and connection. Male symptoms of depression often display as aggression, anger or withdrawal and boys are more likely to fail at school.

"When I first started working, men would come into therapy as though it was a red-light district in Amsterdam, there was such embarrassment about it," Meades says. "I think men now feel they have permission to ask for help, but too often they still don't act."

The integrative psychotherapist is a calming, reassuring presence – open, empathetic and egoless. He doesn't naturally talk about himself, which is tricky for an interview. "Therapy is not like having a great chat," he says. "My sessions are not about me."

After more than 25 years working in the NHS, listening to hundreds of patients' deepest fears, two years ago he decided to leave and write a book, *I'm Fine (But Not Really)*, to help men by giving them coping mechanisms and practical advice – a tool kit for the mind. He has also seen the rise in casual criticism of masculinity in the past two decades. Too often men are deemed dangerous predators or useless appendages, no longer the breadwinners. Many retreat into themselves, overwhelmed by the expectations placed on them.

"It's undeserved," he says. "I've worked with so many decent men. They aren't bad or broken; they are just struggling to adapt and don't have the vocabulary or skills to cope. So, I thought I could share some insights without men having to cross the therapist's threshold, go on a long NHS waiting list or pay." Men in the 21st century have far more complex needs, frustrations, expectations and financial worries and responsibilities, he believes, and are increasingly underconfident.

COURTESY OF PETER MEADES

Meades with his partner, the chef José Pizarro

'Young men don't get what testosterone is doing to them, making them more impulsive'

"I remember they would come to therapy years ago asking, 'Who am I?' Now they come asking, 'What's wrong with me?' That's a real shift."

Younger people, he says, seek labels. "I think it's the medicalisation of society. They want a diagnosis. But I worry about overlabelling. I am not sure these emotional and psychological problems should all be seen as a medical condition." Nearly 700,000 people are now waiting for a diagnosis for ADHD in England. "Some people find their life is changed by a diagnosis," he says. "It helps them to make sense of why they may have struggled, but a description alone doesn't change stuff. You also need coping mechanisms."

Depression is by far the highest cause of referral, with more than 80 per cent of people seeing a psychotherapist because they can't shake their despondency. "Antidepressants are often a great help, but there can be a sense of emotional numbing," Meades says. "If a person has a chronic view that life is no longer worth living, then you need to treat them medically. But there is a degree of overprescribing, because talking therapies are more expensive and GPs don't have long to make assessments and decisions."

His male clients often want a quick prescription that will alleviate their pain rather than help them to thrive. Too many men feel chronically lonely and isolated, he says. "The phone has increased isolation, although it appears to offer connection. Men go down rabbit holes, rather than make plans with their mates."

The manosphere, Meades believes, is a symptom of a male culture that is looking for somewhere to belong. "These influencers tell [the young] to exercise and work hard and supply a doctrine, almost like a religion, that makes them feel special," he says. "They provide structure, rules, dogma and a false sense of security. It's become tribal, but they are pitting these boys against girls, minorities, gays. Young boys may feel they have finally found a home, but only at the cost of excluding everyone else."

Meades also thinks angry young men don't understand their hormones in the way women do. "We underestimate testosterone," he says. "Women are aware of the menopause. Young men don't get what testosterone is doing to them, from making them more impulsive and aggressive to mood swings."

Many young gay men are struggling too. "We may think they now have it easier, but they often still have to split themselves into an acceptable public self and private self," Meades says. "They may feel ostracised by the anti-gay prejudice that appears to be on the rise again. That's a shift. Social media has become so polarising and incendiary that everyone now feels a victim."

Meades wants men to talk about issues that unite them. "Shame is one," he says. "Men often carry shame that they aren't living up to who they believe they should be. They use words such as 'worthless' and 'useless' more in clinics. They haven't yet worked out their new role. Masculinity is complex. The younger generation are judgmental in different ways. They also have rules and the young aren't allowed to make mistakes now, or they worry about being ostracised. Older men talk about the challenges of modern fatherhood, how to parent and keep their sense of identity. We need to learn a new emotional literacy."

Instead, men tend to self-medicate through numbing addictive substances or thrill-seeking. "Older men tend to have more issues with drink and gambling," Meades says. "It's not uncommon for younger men to come to therapy with a porn addiction. Older men don't see it as problematic, but some younger men struggle with being overwhelmed by graphic online images that draw them into darker places." He has seen an increase in men worried about sexual dysfunction or unable to form loving relationships.

"We still don't know exactly how this flood of often violent online porn is changing behaviours," he says. "I suspect there are people who are vulnerable and others who can make the distinction

Interview continues on page 37

WHAT EVERY MAN NEEDS TO KNOW
A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THERAPY

No psychobabble, no fuss – Dr Peter Meades's practical tool kit for men

Men grow up with very particular messages about what it means to be a man long before they've had the chance to discover or decide for themselves. "Man up!" "Don't be soft!" "Be a man!" "Boys don't cry!" "Real men get on with it!" "Stop being so emotional!"

In the therapy room, I've met countless men who feel the pressure of expectations. Some continually push themselves harder to project toughness, even when they feel exhausted. Others find themselves withdrawing into silence because speaking about pain or emotions feels too risky. Over time this can develop into anxiety, depression, addictions or difficulties in relationships. For some men, it becomes a constant, dull ache and chronic sense that life has lost its meaning.

HOW MEN CAN UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES BETTER

Self-awareness means recognising how you think, what you feel and why you act in particular ways. Without self-awareness you're likely to be repeating the same patterns over and over. Self-awareness rarely develops through thinking alone. Men often say that, "Talking doesn't help," or, "If only I could change things by just thinking differently."

One of the simplest and most overlooked tools for gaining insight is writing things down. This is more than tapping out notes on a phone. I'm talking about active writing, done slowly and with intention, to reflect, digest, process and clarify. It slows down the mind, making experiences easier to hold and understand.

Try this freestyle writing exercise

- Take five minutes now and start writing.
- Use the prompt: "What does it feel like to be me today?"
- Let the words come without overthinking or editing.
- Once you've started writing, keep writing, without stopping to think.
- Write by hand if you can.
- Simply notice what appears on the page.

LEARN TO RECOGNISE ANTs

All types of thoughts that are automatic and unhelpful are called ANTs (automatic negative thoughts). They arrive quickly and before you know it, they're appearing all over the place, shifting your mood and tensing your body. But ANTs are nothing more than patterns of thinking (neurological pathways) that have been learnt along the way and are not your fault at all. They often develop from early experiences or from messages about yourself that stuck. Examples are:

- All-or-nothing thinking: life gets reduced to extremes, with no room for shades of grey or complexity. It becomes yes or no, in or out, success or failure. You miss one gym session and immediately think, I've blown it. I might as well give up.
- Overgeneralising: a clumsy moment in a conversation turns into, "I'm hopeless at talking to people and socialising."
- Filtering: ten people praise your work, one criticises it and that single comment is all you think about for the rest of the day.
- Catastrophising: a small hiccup at work becomes, "I'll be sacked, I'll never get another job."
- Emotional reasoning: you feel like a failure, so you conclude you must be one.
- Personalising: your partner is in a bad mood and not as chirpy as usual, so your first thought is, what have I done now?
- Labelling: you call yourself an idiot after one small mistake, as though a fleeting moment defines your whole character.

Underneath your ANTs there are deeper, core beliefs, most often formed early on in life. These core beliefs about yourself and others are part of the script that your thoughts are reading from: "I'm not enough." "People always leave me." "If I let my guard down, everything will collapse." "I'm no good with people." When you notice this connection, it makes sense why certain thoughts keep coming back. You don't need to overexamine this or try to rewrite every single one of those beliefs right away. What matters most is noticing when any of the thoughts you're having might be a result of the underlying script. Your thinking brain now has a chance to step in, and you have a chance to choose to consider the alternatives.

Try this: evening check-in

At the end of the day, note one thing that lifted you up, one thing that drained you and one thing you might try to do differently tomorrow. Over time you'll start to see patterns emerging. You'll notice what restores your energy and what takes it away, and knowing this is what helps you to make the small adjustments that can improve your life over the longer term.

MASCULINITY ISN'T ONE THING

When I ask the male clients I work with what it means to them personally "to be a man", the answers are often similar: to be strong, to stay in control, to not show weaknesses, to provide for others, to be tough, to be reliable, to hold your own. These qualities aren't necessarily all bad, but when they're the only qualities men feel allowed to embody, they then become a straitjacket.

Try this: redefining masculinity

- Take a sheet of paper and draw a vertical line down the middle.
- In the column on the left side, write down the messages you grew up with about how men "should" behave.
- In the column on the right side, write down the qualities you want to live by and the ones that feel true to who you genuinely are. You might be surprised to learn that you can choose, and at how freeing that feels.

DEALING WITH THE ANDROPAUSE

In most men, testosterone declines gradually from their thirties onwards. By their fifties or sixties, the accumulative effect of this slow decline can produce low energy, low libido, changes in mood, loss of muscle mass, increased fat around the middle, slower recovery from illness or injury, less motivation and disrupted sleep.

How to get through the andropause

- Good sleep is the ultimate remedy. Testosterone levels rise overnight and poor sleep accelerates decline. Protecting rest by reducing alcohol and late-night screen usage, and creating a healthy night-time rhythm, can restore you more than you might think.
- A balanced, protein-rich diet helps sustain your energy and maintains muscle. High-sugar and ultraprocessed diets result in energy crashes, mood swings and abdominal fat gain.
- Movement is crucial. It's about sustaining vitality not about punishing the body or clinging to youthful performance. Strength training preserves bone and muscle. Cardio supports mood and heart health. Yoga, t'ai chi and stretching reduce stiffness and aid sleep. Even walking for 20 minutes a day lowers irritability.

What I ask a man in his first therapy session

1. Your body and physical health
- How is your general physical health at the moment?
- Do you have any relevant medical history, including ongoing medical conditions or health concerns?
- What's your energy level like day to day?
- How do you tend to look after your body (with food, exercise, alcohol, substances)?
- How often do you notice physical symptoms like tension, headaches, stomach issues or disturbed sleep when you are stressed?

2. Sleep and rest
- How many hours of sleep do you usually get and how refreshed do you feel when you wake?
- Do you struggle to fall asleep or stay asleep, or wake up early?
- What are your normal habits around bedtime (screen use, alcohol, late working)?
- Do you give yourself time to rest or do you push on until you are too tired to continue?

3. Work and daily demands
- What does a typical day look like?
- How much pressure do you feel in your job or daily responsibilities?
- Do you feel valued in your work or is it mainly a source of stress?
- How well do you balance work with your personal/home life?
- What role does money play in your stress, confidence or sense of security?

4. Habits and coping
- How do you cope when you feel low or under pressure?
- Do you notice any patterns with using alcohol, drugs, gambling, food, sex, porn or your phone?
- Which habits help you, or help you initially, and which ones leave you feeling worse afterwards?
- How do you spend your free time, and does it restore you or exhaust you?

5. Relationships and connection
- Who are the closest people to you in your life right now?
- Do you feel supported, encouraged and understood by them?
- How is your relationship with your partner (if you have one)?
- How connected do you feel to friends or family?
- Do you share what's going on for you?
- Have there been any significant changes in your relationships recently?

6. Early life and upbringing
- What were your circumstances in early life?
- What was it like growing up in your family?
- How were feelings handled in your household or place where you grew up?
- Were there particular experiences that shaped how you see yourself now?
- Who encouraged/nurtured you and who criticised you?
- When you think about your childhood, what stands out the most?

7. Beliefs and self-talk
- What are the main rules or messages you carry about yourself?
- Do you notice any "I should..." or "I must..." statements in your mind?
- What do you believe about showing emotion, asking for help or relying on others?

MEN, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT YOUR JOB

There are a lot of men who live as if their whole worth is measured by what they do, what they create or produce or what titles they hold. Of course, these things can be admirable: the early starts, the long hours, achieving things, the commitment to providing for family. But I meet many men who feel low when they stop. Some describe anxiety or guilt. These are often men who can't remember the last time they let themselves play – men who perhaps fear that without their job they would have no idea who they really are.

I often meet men who introduce themselves through their job title before anything else. "I'm a manager." "I run a bar." "I'm a solicitor." When I ask who they are beyond that, they feel temporarily thrown, because they've never really thought much about it. Sometimes they feel a bit anxious because the question feels unsettling. Sometimes they feel a bit gloomy, because they're aware there may not be much left outside the role. I've heard numerous men say, "If I stop working, there's nothing much left. That's the end, I suppose." These words capture something many men feel but rarely admit, which is that work has become the armour that hides all the uncertainty, the routine that holds life together, the stage on which they feel validated and affirmed.

Work is certainly a part of you, but it is only one part. Alongside the professional or job self, you have a partner self, a father self, a friend self, a playful self, a reflective self, a spiritual self, a creative self, a sport self. When work is the only part you encourage and develop, the others get left in the shadows. Our worth, wellbeing and mental health is more important than any title, payslip or job description. I hear men say, "As long as everything in work is fine, I'm fine." It sounds reasonable and somewhat understandable, but when work is not balanced with other aspects of life, if the job falters, so does the man.

Try this: identity pie

Take a moment to notice the different parts that make up your identity – your roles, values, relationships, faith, work, culture and interests. Which parts feel central and which have been pushed to the edges? Noticing the balance between them can be revealing, helping you see where your energy and sense of worth are currently invested. The task here is to rediscover the other means of worth that already exist in your life, even if they've been overlooked or left dormant. One of the richest sources of our identity is found in relationships. The people you love, and who love you, don't value you for your productivity and output alone. They value your presence, your personality and all aspects of who you are.

In therapy I often ask, "What mattered to you before you started working?" Sometimes there's a long silence, but some men eventually say, "running", "my mates", "my allotment" or "music". Behind those answers are values such as belonging, giving back, joy, loyalty, spirituality or creativity. These values can get buried under the burden of work.

Try this: imagine retirement

Picture yourself at the moment of your retirement, with no job title to describe you. Who are you then? What parts of you come forward? What would you want those closest to you to remember? Write a few notes or say them out aloud. This loosens the work knot in the present so that work becomes a part of your life and not the whole of it.

I'm Fine (But Not Really): What Men Need To Know, Without Going to Therapy *by Dr Peter Meades (Little, Brown, £16.99) is published on August 6. To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on online orders over £25. Discount available for Times+ members*

Continues on page 37

SWADLING

BRASSWARE

BATHROOM TAPS, SHOWERS AND ACCESSORIES. HANDMADE IN ENGLAND

HELPLINE@SWADLINGBRASSWARE.CO.UK

WWW.SWADLINGBRASSWARE.CO.UK

THE TIMES

Eat!

8-PAGE PULLOUT

The only six broad bean recipes you need for summer

Broad bean, feta and mint salad, page 28

RECIPES
Tony Turnbull

PHOTOGRAPHS
Romas Foord

2

I used to spend hours as a child podding broad beans from the garden, but far from putting me off, it made them my favourite summer vegetable. I don't grow them myself, so these days I am more likely to buy them frozen than fresh, as they can go from sweet to starchy soon after picking.
Tony Turnbull

1. BROAD BEAN, FETA AND MINT SALAD

Serves 2. Total time: 15 min (page 27)

Cold, shrivelled bean skins never look or taste good, so the effort of slipping the beans out of their skins is well worth it. You can add garlic, honey and mustard to your vinaigrette, but I love the simplicity of just lemon and good-quality olive oil.

- **250g frozen baby broad beans**
- **50g feta, crumbled**
- **Few sprigs mint, leaves picked and roughly torn**
- **25g pine nuts, toasted**
- **1 lemon, juiced and zested**
- **3 tbsp olive oil**

1. Boil some water in a kettle and pour over the frozen beans. Leave them to sit in the water until they have defrosted, then drain and slip the beans out of their outer skins. Place the beans on kitchen paper or a clean tea towel to dry as much as possible.
2. Place the beans on a serving plate and scatter over the feta, mint, pine nuts and lemon zest.
3. Whisk together the lemon juice and oil, season well and drizzle over the beans.

2. SAUTÉED SCALLOPS WITH PANCETTA AND BROAD BEANS

Serves 2. Time: 15 min

Bacon and scallops are a great combination, as are broad beans and bacon. QED, bacon, scallops and broad beans work brilliantly together. You can use smoky streaked bacon instead of pancetta if you like, but make sure there is plenty of fat on it, as you need it to coat the beans.

- **150g frozen broad beans**
- **8 scallops**
- **1 tbsp olive oil**
- **130g pancetta, diced**
- **1 small handful parsley, chopped**
- **1 splash red wine vinegar**

1. Boil the broad beans until just tender, about 3 minutes, then drain. Once cooled, slip them out of their skins, if you like, and set aside.
2. Heat a large pan over a medium heat. Brush the scallops with olive oil and season well. Place the scallops in the pan and cook for one minute, before turning them over. Add the pancetta. After another minute, remove the scallops to a warm plate.
3. Once the pancetta is golden, add the broad beans and coat them in the released fat to warm them through. Remove the pan from the heat and add chopped parsley and splash of red wine vinegar.
4. Serve the scallops on top of the beans.

3. BROAD BEAN BRUSCHETTA

Serves 6. Total time: 15 min

These broad bean toasts are great as a canapé/starter with drinks. Use rocket if you can't find pea shoots.

- **300g frozen broad beans**
- **75g pecorino, grated**
- **½ lemon, juiced and zested**
- **75ml olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
- **Pinch chilli flakes, to taste**
- **6 slices sourdough, toasted**
- **2 garlic cloves**
- **1 large handful pea shoots**

1. Defrost the broad beans by covering them in boiled water. Leave to cool, then slip out of their skins.
2. Place half the beans in a food processor with the pecorino, lemon juice and zest, olive oil and chilli flakes and blitz until smooth. Add the remaining beans and pulse to combine but leave slightly chunky. Season to taste.
3. Drizzle each slice of toast with olive oil and rub with the garlic cloves. Top with the bean mix and scatter over the pea shoots. Cut each slice into two or four before serving.

3

4

4. BROAD BEAN, COURGETTE AND RICOTTA LASAGNE

Serves 3-4. Total time: 15 min

More a pasta salad than a lasagne, I suppose, but nevertheless an assembly of lovely summer flavours. You could buy a tub of fresh pesto, but I really wouldn't recommend the stuff in jars.

- **300g fresh lasagne sheets**
- **150g frozen broad beans**
- **1 courgette, grated**
- **½ lemon, juiced and zested**
- **1 tbsp olive oil**
- **200g ricotta**
- **100g fresh pesto**
- **1 small red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped, to serve**
- **Few mint leaves, torn, to serve**
- **Parmesan, grated, to serve**

1. Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions, then refresh with cold water. Cut each piece in three and set aside.
2. Defrost the beans in boiling water. Once cool enough to handle, slip the beans out of their skins. Place in a bowl with the grated courgette, lemon juice and zest, oil, ricotta and most of the pesto. Season well, stir to combine then fold in the pasta.
3. Serve with the remaining pesto drizzled over and a scattering of chilli, mint leaves and parmesan.

5. BARBECUED BROAD BEANS WITH HAM

Serves 2. Total time: 10 min

It was my friend the chef José Pizarro who introduced me to the joys of young beans grilled in their pods. This also works really well with new-season peas. You can buy ready-made rosemary salt from Marks & Spencer and the Cornish Sea Salt Company.

- **500g baby broad beans in their pods**
- **1 tsp fresh rosemary, very finely chopped**
- **½ lemon, zested and juiced**
- **4 tsp sea salt**
- **2 tbsp olive oil**
- **125 serrano ham, torn**

1. Place the broad beans on a hot barbecue over direct heat and cook until the pods are charred on both sides, 5-10 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the rosemary, lemon zest and sea salt.
2. Once the beans are cooked, transfer to a serving plate. Drizzle with olive oil, squeeze over the lemon juice and scatter with the flavoured salt. Nestle the ham among the pods and eat with your fingers, discarding the outer pods.

5

6

6. RICE WITH BROAD BEANS, ARTICHOKES AND PEAS

Serves 6. Total time: 1 hr

This is based on a classic Spanish dish from Murcia in southwest Spain, known as arroz meloso. Meloso means "creamy", ie the texture of a risotto rather than dry like a paella. Add any vegetables you like.

- **75ml olive oil**
- **2 onions, peeled and roughly chopped**
- **1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped**
- **4 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped**
- **1 tsp smoked paprika**
- **300g paella rice**
- **2 vegetable or chicken stock cubes**
- **250g broad beans, defrosted**
- **250g peas, defrosted**
- **1 jar grilled artichoke hearts in oil, drained**
- **2 tbsp parsley, roughly chopped, to serve**
- **1 lemon, to serve**

1. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and cook the onions and pepper until soft, about 20 minutes, stirring regularly. Add the garlic and cook for another, then stir in the paprika.
2. Add the rice and cook, stirring for a couple of minutes before adding the stock cubes and 1 litre boiling water. Season and stir to mix in the stock cubes as it comes back to the boil.
3. Turn the heat to its lowest setting and simmer for 15-18 minutes without stirring until the rice is cooked but with a slight bite.
4. Stir in the beans, peas and artichokes, cover tightly with a lid or foil, and leave to sit for 10 minutes before serving with the parsley and lemon wedges. ■

'JOSÉ PIZARRO SHOWED ME THE JOYS OF YOUNG BEANS GRILLED IN THEIR PODS'

Staycation? Five Greek dishes that

It wasn't just Odysseus who spent decades travelling across Greece looking for home. Last year Panos Manuelides, cook, author and founder of the Greek deli company Odysea, toured his home country, from beekeepers in Thessaly to olive growers in Corinthia, searching for the dishes that epitomise the land of his birth. The results can be found in his book, *Greek Odysea*, which is filled with the recipes he and his family grew up cooking, such as his father's taramosalata and juicy tomatoes stuffed with fragrant herbs. "These are the dishes of memory and inheritance," he says. "They carry the flavours from across the country." **Hannah Evans**

1. TARAMOSALATA

Serves 6-8 as a meze. Total time: 15 min

Taramosalata, the classic Greek meze, is known for its creamy texture and delicate, umami flavour. You could add smoked trout to make it extra special. Traditionally served chilled with warm pitta or fresh vegetables, it has been a staple on Greek tables for generations.

- **100g stale crusty bread, with crusts on**
- **100g cod roe**
- **1 very small onion, roughly chopped**
- **60ml lemon juice, freshly squeezed**
- **240ml oil, made up of 180ml olive oil and 60ml extra virgin olive oil**

1. Soak the bread in cold water for 2-3 minutes until soft, then squeeze out as much liquid as possible.
2. Place the cod roe, onion and lemon juice in a food processor and blend to a smooth paste. Add the bread and blend again. With the motor running, slowly drizzle in the olive oils through the feed spout until the mixture thickens into a creamy, smooth dip. If the texture is too loose, add a little more oil. If it's too thick, adjust with a splash of water.
3. Serve chilled, with warm crusty bread – sourdough works well – pitta or fresh vegetables.
Tip For a special version, replace 50g cod roe with 50g smoked trout.

2. POMEGRANATE AND WHIPPED FETA SALAD

Serves 4. Total time: 15 min

Pomegranate seeds add a burst of sweet freshness to this salad, while toasted almonds bring a satisfying crunch. The whipped feta can be made up to three days in advance and stored in the refrigerator.

For the whipped feta

- **200g feta**
- **3 tbsp thick Greek yoghurt**
- **1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil**
- **½ lemon, juiced**

For the salad

- **100g butterhead lettuce, torn into bitesized pieces**
- **100g radicchio, shredded**
- **2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil**
- **100g pomegranate seeds**
- **50g roasted almonds, roughly chopped**
- **2 tbsp pomegranate balsamic vinegar**

1. For the whipped feta, place the feta,

3. PEPPER AND FETA DIP

4. LEEK AND FETA PIE

feel like you're on the Med

yoghurt, olive oil and lemon juice in a food processor or blender and blend until completely smooth and fluffy, scraping down the sides as needed. Season with black pepper or any of the optional additions listed below. Refrigerate until needed.

2. In a large bowl, toss the lettuce and radicchio with a little salt, black pepper and 1 tbsp olive oil. Arrange the greens in a shallow serving bowl and scatter the pomegranate seeds and roasted almonds evenly over the top, reserving a small amount of both for garnish. Using a spoon or piping bag, place small mounds of whipped feta across the salad (or however you like). Garnish with the reserved pomegranate seeds and almonds and drizzle the pomegranate balsamic vinegar and remaining olive oil over the top. Serve immediately.

Optional additions

- ½ small garlic clove, minced
- 1-2 tbsp fresh herbs (dill, mint, parsley or basil), chopped
- Dried chilli flakes

3. ROASTED PEPPER, PRESERVED LEMON AND FETA DIP

Serves 4 as a starter or meze. Total time: 10 min

Inspired by the more traditional htipiti, this smoky, tangy dip is simple to make but full of complexity. With a deep, mellow base, thanks to the sweet roasted peppers, a bright, fragrant kick from the preserved lemon and crumbled feta for a salty finish, it's perfect as a meze with warm pitta or crunchy vegetables, or as a vibrant spread for sandwiches or wraps.

- **1 x 450g jar flame-roasted red and yellow peppers, drained**
- **50g preserved lemon, rinsed and finely chopped**
- **250g feta, crumbled**
- **2 tbsp thick Greek yoghurt**
- **2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
- **1 small garlic clove, minced**
- **Flat-leaf parsley or mint leaves, to garnish**

PHOTOGRAPHS Ola O Smit

1. Pat dry the drained roasted peppers with paper towels and roughly chop them.
2. In a food processor or blender, combine the roasted peppers, preserved lemon, feta, yoghurt, olive oil and garlic. Blend until smooth but still slightly textured. Taste and add freshly ground black pepper as desired. There is no need to add extra salt, as the feta and preserved lemon are already salty.
3. Transfer the dip to a shallow bowl, drizzle with a little olive oil and garnish with parsley or mint leaves. Serve with warm pita, crusty bread or raw vegetables.

4. LEEK AND FETA PIE

Serves 6-8. Total time: 1 hr 30 min

This pie is very popular in Greece, especially during winter and spring when leeks are plentiful. Pies like this – known as pites – are a cornerstone of Greek home cooking, often prepared to use up whatever is in season by encasing it in golden, flaky pastry. Served warm or at ➡

room temperature, this can be anything from a satisfying anytime snack to a light lunch, meze or picnic dish.

- **5-6 large leeks**
- **3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for brushing**
- **1 large onion, finely chopped**
- **3 tbsp dill, chopped**
- **3 tbsp flat-leaf parsley, chopped**
- **400g feta, crumbled**
- **2 eggs, lightly beaten**
- **1 x 500g pack filo pastry (10-12 sheets), thawed if frozen**
- **Sesame seeds, for sprinkling (optional)**

1. Cut the leeks in half lengthways, then slice thinly. Wash thoroughly and drain in a colander.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large, deep frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and leeks, season with salt and stir gently until wilted and softened. Season with black pepper and allow any excess liquid to evaporate, then remove from the heat and leave to cool for about 10 minutes.
3. Once the leeks and onions have cooled slightly, stir in the chopped dill, parsley, crumbled feta and beaten eggs. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.
4. Preheat the oven to 170C/gas 4 (do not use the fan setting, as this can dry out the filo). Brush a rectangular or round ovenproof dish, approx 30 x 25cm or 30 x 35cm, with olive oil. A Pyrex or ceramic dish works well. For a crispier base, a metal roasting tin or aluminium tray is ideal.
5. Lay a sheet of filo pastry in the prepared dish and brush with olive oil. Repeat with half the sheets to form the base. Spread the leek and cheese filling evenly over the base. Brush the remaining filo sheets with oil and layer on top of the filling. Tuck any excess pastry around the edges to form a neat border. Brush the top with olive oil, then score lightly into portions with a sharp knife. Sprinkle with sesame seeds, if desired.
6. Bake for 45-50 minutes until the top is lightly golden. Allow to cool slightly before slicing and serving.

5. STUFFED TOMATOES

Serves 6-8. Total time: 1 hr 20 min

This dish is a summer staple in Greece. While it can be made with just tomatoes, it's always best to add a few green peppers too for variety and flavour.

- **10 medium tomatoes**
- **2 medium green peppers**
- **4 tbsp granulated sugar, plus 2 tsp for the filling**
- **240ml extra virgin olive oil**
- **1 very large onion (or 2 medium), grated**
- **40g pine nuts**

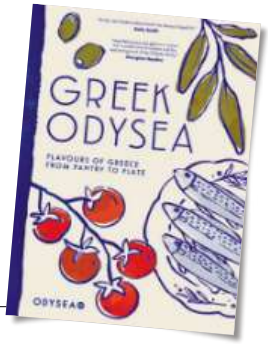
5. STUFFED TOMATOES

'THIS DISH IS A SUMMER STAPLE IN GREECE'

- **12 heaped tbsp short-grain or arborio rice (about 330g)**
- **60ml dry white wine**
- **75g currants**
- **2 tbsp flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped**
- **3 medium potatoes, each cut into 4 or 6 wedges**

1. Slice off the tops of the tomatoes and peppers and set them aside – they will be used for lids after stuffing. Remove and discard the pith and seeds from the peppers. Using a teaspoon, carefully scoop out the pulp from the tomatoes without breaking their skins, reserving the pulp.
2. Sprinkle the inside of the tomatoes and peppers generously with sugar, using about a teaspoon each.
3. Sieve the tomato pulp, discarding as many seeds as possible, then puree the pulp in a blender or food processor. Set aside.
4. Heat 120ml olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat and gently fry the onion until translucent. Add the pine nuts and rice and fry gently for another minute or two. Pour in the white wine and stir until it has evaporated. Add half the pureed tomato pulp along with 350ml hot water, the currants and parsley. Season with salt, pepper and 2 tsp sugar. Cover and simmer very gently for about 10 minutes until all the liquid is absorbed.
5. Preheat the oven to 160C fan/gas 4. Using a teaspoon, fill the tomato and pepper cavities about three-quarters full with the rice mixture to allow room for the rice to expand. Place the reserved tomato and pepper tops back on, then arrange the tomatoes and peppers in an ovenproof dish, tucking the potato wedges vertically in between them. Drizzle the remaining olive oil over everything, then drizzle over the remaining tomato pulp and 240ml water.
6. Bake for 45 minutes until the tomatoes and peppers are tender and slightly charred and the rice is fully cooked. ■

Extracted from *Greek Odysea: Flavours of Greece from Pantry to Plate* by Odysea (Quadrille, £25), published on August 6. To order a copy call 020 3176 2935 or go to timesbookshop.co.uk



LOOK GOOD DO GOOD

JEANS FOR GENES

Mon 14 – Sun 20 Sept

A limited edition t-shirt designed by Stephen Libby and Daniel Quirke. Every purchase supports children living with life-altering genetic conditions.

Buy yours now for £22 and start changing lives at:

jeansforgenesmerch.com

The t-shirt is available in white and oat with a blue or orange design.

This September, why not organise a Jeans for Genes day with your school, workplace or community, to help raise vital funds to support children with life altering genetic conditions in the UK.

Sign up for your free fundraising pack or make a donation today
jeansforgenes.org

Image by: *Studio Sieler*

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Jeans for Genes © 2026 All rights reserved. Registered trademark of the Chronic Granulomatous Disorder Society (CGD Society), 46-48 East Street, Epsom, KT17 1HQ. Registered Charity No. 1143049. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England & Wales No. 07607593

TIMES Events

Caitlin Moran on How to be Hopeful

Join us for a brilliantly funny and uplifting evening as Times columnist **Caitlin Moran** hits the stage for the London instalment of her nationwide tour. In conversation with her friend and colleague – Times Radio presenter **Hugo Rifkind** – Caitlin will unravel the themes of her essential new book, *How to be Hopeful: A Year of Attempting to Feel Less Awful About the World.*

Thursday, September 17 | 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Bryanston Square, London, W1H 1PQ

Book your tickets at **thetimes.com/events**

between online and everyday life. But the message should be clear – sex shouldn't be about gratification for one sex or the other, but a coming together. That doesn't come across online, but men need to know there are treatments."

Meades realises, however, that many men will never access them. "This book is for them," he says. "They can download it or listen to it without anyone knowing." There are dozens of practical suggestions. The first is to keep a diary. "Diaries are seen as more female," he says. "But journalling really helps to process, reflect and see patterns in your life. People now have 50 tabs open but can't write with a pen. Men are amazed how cathartic scribbling down thoughts can be."

Having a timeline is a great starting point to becoming more self-aware, he suggests. "Draw a line and place events above and below as to how they made you feel. We carry so much internally, we think about regrets about our past, but we rarely take time to map it out and look at the sections of our life. Where was your mood? When did it dip or rise? Why? How did it pick up again? It's about where you set the line. Are you being realistic in your aspirations and desires?"

Women are more likely to join yoga and Pilates classes and activities aimed at soothing their nervous systems. "Learning to be in the present is like a muscle," Meades says. "It's not meditation – many men will say, 'That's not for me' – but it's about thinking about your breath and your senses. You need to be able to ground yourself in what you are seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, to reconnect."

He suggests drawing an interpersonal map of relationships and friends. "You can draw four concentric circles and put yourself in the middle and work out who is in your life, their emotional proximity and think about how each is working, whether they are strong, healthy or disputatious, who you would like to be close to and which relationships you need to address," he says. "Some relationships are abusive and it's appropriate to create distance, but a culture of delete is wrong. Ghosting is not constructive. You can't say, 'You are not serving my purpose any more.' A healthy life is about interaction."

By the time men go into therapy they are usually quite open, because it takes a lot to come and sit down and talk, Meades says. "It's courageous because it makes you vulnerable and it is exposing. You need to work out what you are not talking about. Talking is a great avoidance defence. But with experience you get to sense when someone is not sharing."

The key is learning emotional literacy. "Using coping strategies such as work, alcohol, recreational drugs and over-exercising can provide short-term solutions, but by the end of this book I hope men will be able to recognise what they are feeling and be able to name it and know what to do with it," he says.

Meades on an island-hopping trip to Greece in 1998

'I've never met any innately evil men, just unhappy, confused or desperate ones'

Meades is well-adjusted, happy in his relationship with José Pizarro, the chef who revolutionised Spanish cuisine in Britain with his tapas bar and his restaurant next to the White Cube gallery in Bermondsey, southeast London. Pizarro now has seven restaurants and they live together in Southwark with their two dogs, a wine cellar and an exceptional collection of modern art, which includes works by Sir Antony Gormley and Gilbert & George, throwing eclectic parties. "I'm spoilt," Meades says. "José does rice insanely well. I make puddings. We go to Margate to hang out with Tracey Emin. Lots of our friends are artists. I feel lucky."

Theirs is an enviable lifestyle. It is easy to think Meades doesn't relate to other people's struggles, disappointments and rejections. It is hard to convince him to open up about his childhood. "Self-disclosure as a therapist isn't helpful," he says. "My career is about listening. I almost never discuss myself, so I didn't put myself into the book."

When he does begin to chat about himself, it is clear why he is so passionate about helping people. "I was born in Caerphilly and grew up gay in a mining village in the Eighties at the time of the miners' strike," he says. "My family were born-again, fundamentalist, evangelical Christians and I had three older rugby-playing brothers. The household was quite extreme. It was challenging." His brothers did not protect their younger sibling. "One is a fundamentalist evangelical Christian. Another went into the army. We now have a very good relationship."

His relationship with his parents was difficult. "My father and mother felt I was different, awkward, and they didn't want to see that strangeness," he says. "I understand it was difficult for them. There was then a sense of grief for parents who had a gay child – a loss of normal expectations for the child and themselves, a worry about what that child may face and the prejudice they might encounter. But my parents also felt it was sinful for me to be gay and that I would be condemned to hell and damnation. They were heartbroken and devastated. They thought it was a choice."

Until he was 18, Meades agreed. "You are raised with that doctrine," he says. "I feel I landed in a family that I couldn't understand and who would never understand me. I rarely go back."

Both his parents have died. "I have dedicated the book to my father. I think he was autistic. He was very cold and awkward. I got out by telling my parents I wanted to read theology at university and coming to London. I went to Greenwich for a year, but the other students all wanted to go into the ministry. I left. A friend said, 'Go into nursing. There will always be jobs and see where it takes you.'"

While doing a nursing degree at King's College London, he encountered therapy. "I would try techniques with patients and they would relax," he says. "It was at the time of Aids and I worked on the Aids wards. I never felt afraid, but it was a harrowing and tragic period."

He also went into therapy. "I was 21. It helped me to deal a lot with the trauma of my formative years. I still have a strong faith, but not dogma. I occasionally go to church. I miss the music and the sense of community, but it shouldn't be excluding."

Meades and Pizarro are having a civil ceremony this autumn. "We met on Guardian Soulmates years ago and went for dinner in Bermondsey Street. Now José has three restaurants there. So it is our street. We did ask the church there about a civil partnership a while ago, but they refused. I noticed they had a huge screen for the World Cup on the altar. It's a bit of a knife in the back. You can worship football, yet they couldn't bless us."

He wouldn't change his life. "I think being gay in my family made me more understanding of others," Meades says. "I was always reading the room from a young age. Hypervigilant doesn't sound healthy, but a gay child in a Welsh mining village learns quickly how to tune in to others' minds to stay safe and adapt. It was a gift that I can now use to help others. Good therapy should make you more you. I've never met any innately evil men, just unhappy, confused or depressed ones. Men worry they won't like what they discover about themselves, but they will when they understand themselves more." ■

COURTESY OF PETER MEADES. GROOMING: CELINE NONON AT ARLINGTON ARTISTS USING DERMALOGICA AND ERBORIAN

I saw my perfect unborn baby on a scan. Hours later I learnt that the pain doctors had dismissed for years was a tumour. I have terminal cancer. I won't see my baby girl grow up

For years Haelwyn Adams has tried to get medics to take her stomach pain seriously. She was ignored. Now, at 41, and after the birth of her daughter, she is on a mission to tell women to stand up to the medical profession – before it's too late. As told to Susannah Jowitt

Haelwyn Adams with her husband, Luke, and nine-month-old Magnolia Sunshine at home in London. Portrait: Jooney Woodward

I have always lived my life in fight or flight but this finally seemed like a moment to relax. There she was, my miracle baby, up there on the screen. At this 20-week scan, we could see she was perfect. Our painful journey through miscarriage and loss had finally ended.

And yet there was still that stomach pain, the demon never far away, that had tormented me for years now; had kept me frozen in the foetal position in my bed, unable to move without screaming, a knife twisting in my gut. It had been explained by an array of doctors as IBS, a grumbling appendix or "just bad period pain". I was young and fit, what was I making such a fuss about?

I have always been tough, taught to push through the pain. You have to be if you've grown up as a child athlete, as I did, as a competitive swimmer in South Africa. I didn't realise that was just the beginning of my relationship with pain.

But as a woman of 37 years old, when I started to be in pain beyond any levels I had known before, it seemed I could no longer be trusted to have an opinion about my own body. So when I told doctor after doctor that the stomach pain I was in was something different, I was repeatedly told I couldn't be right. I was healthy, only in my thirties; my symptoms were merely IBS, stress and then later, when I started IVF, hormonal side-effects. Doctors don't seem interested in pain. Even my family ended up thinking I was a hypochondriac.

Eventually I began to doubt myself, told myself I was weak. I chose to shut up. I would force myself to ignore the agony, go to work, just keep focusing, eyes on the prize, which was for my fiancé Luke and I to have a baby.

I got pregnant very quickly the first time, with twins, but lost them at six weeks. By then I was in my late thirties, so we started IVF, a process made harder by Luke's work as a pilot and my roving work in film. My next pregnancy was even more devastating. We were told our little boy Troy had Edwards' syndrome, a severe chromosomal genetic disorder that meant he would not survive to full term and, at 14 weeks, my little boy was taken from me.

Looking back, I wonder how I kept on going; how I kept on working, crying with pain as I injected myself with the cocktail of IVF drugs I needed on the film sets where I worked as a hair and make-up designer. I kept on pursuing fitness regimes, dragging my exhausted body to the gym, all so that I could be in the best possible health to get pregnant again. But even at my fittest, I had a gut feeling that there was something wrong with me.

I felt like someone had punched me in the stomach with a dagger; despite extreme laxatives, I felt blocked by permanent constipation and suffered such agony and exhaustion that I soon couldn't imagine a life that wasn't overshadowed like this.

Yet it was all written off by the GPs I saw as the "normal" hormonal hysterics of a woman trying to have a baby, "just the pain of your endometriosis". It was news to me up until that moment that I had endometriosis. What I wanted – and what I asked for from 2021 – was for someone to take me seriously and do some proper investigation of my pain, a colonoscopy, to explain my symptoms.

We used my hard-earned professional health insurance to go private. It was during the time I got pregnant with (and lost) Troy and I think the lovely professor we saw felt sorry for me and didn't want to put me through any more.

"You don't need this, so let's not worry. Your bloods have come back fine and you're simply too young to have colon cancer," he said very gently, and instead of a colonoscopy, he opted for a sigmoidography in just the lower bowel. I was confused by why they didn't just do a full colonoscopy but I trusted him and his kindness – he was a professor, after all. I thought I was in safe hands.

I often think of that sweet man, that *Sliding Doors* moment for me, when he became my angel of death.

The many, many times my warnings were ignored, that there was more to this pain than the ripple effects of my miscarriages, now makes me want to scream. They told me that I was depressed but I wasn't; I was just *focused* – on being as healthy as I could be to carry a baby to term.

By the time I got pregnant again in 2025, under the care of the amazing foetal medicine unit at UCLH, I felt like a spinning tombola drum of drugs. So when the first trimester passed in a blur of pain – knees up to my chin, muscles in spasm, screaming into the pillow agony – I didn't care. I had a sense that this baby was strong, that she was the one and that I would finally meet one of my babies.

She was perfect at that 20-week scan, but I was not. Hours later, I was back at the hospital. I was worried that the magnitude of pain I was in had to affect the baby. Once they'd established that she wasn't in distress, and had examined me to rule out appendicitis, the surgical registrar on duty shrugged and said I should go home and relax. I remember apologising for wasting their time.

On the way to the toilet before we left, another wave of pain threatened to knock me over. My mask of bravery slipped; I leant against the wall, sweat pouring off me, my legs shaking. A doctor on the foetal medicine team was walking past and – just like that – I was in a bed and being sent for a scan. After all those wasted

Haelwyn Adams during pregnancy. Right: her marriage to Luke in June, before her stoma reversal surgery

years of asking, my pain was finally being taken seriously.

And there on the screen, growing alongside our beautiful daughter like a malignant twin, was the shadow of a mass in my gut, later confirmed by a colonoscopy and a biopsy as a tumour. That sweet private consultant, who had denied me the scan that would have revealed it at a manageable stage, had stolen my life with a smile, robbing my baby of a mother, my fiancé of a wife. Now I had stage 4 colon cancer, with a rare BRAF mutation (becoming ever less rare in young, fit female millennials like me) that had also metastasised to my liver.

I was told I had days or weeks to live unless they operated immediately. At 20 weeks, the baby was not considered medically viable so there was an option to abort, remove the tumour and start immediately on chemotherapy, thereby catching the spread to the liver early enough that it could have – probably would have – saved my life. The riskier option was to remove as much of the primary tumour as possible while preserving the pregnancy; ultimately risky for me, but they could protect the baby.

It was the easiest decision I've ever made. I had to save her, even if I was signing my own death certificate.

"For years, I have been ignored and silenced," I told the surgical team fiercely. "That will never happen again! While you may not think she is viable, to me she has been viable since the day I woke up knowing she was there. She comes first. You have to operate around her and, whatever happens, if there needs to be a choice, I am making it now – it's her and it will always be her."

The anesthetic that knocked me out also sedated her and they moved her, sleeping snugly in her birth sac, gently to one side while the surgeon went in, removed the primary tumour and performed a colostomy to reduce the risk of leakage and sepsis, then they slid her back and closed me up.

OLLY BURN; ANNA MCGRANE

We had both survived the surgery, but the next 11 weeks were a terrified blur of knowing that for every inch she grew, so too did the tumours in my liver. When she kicked, which she did often and fiercely, she would visibly strain the wound, but I lied about the pain of this and the pain of the cancer and always tried to take the lowest dose of painkillers, to minimise the amount of OxyContin crossing the placenta to her. I hated the thought of her becoming dependent on the opiates I needed and of having to wean her off them once she was born.

I just wanted to give her the best chance with the least complications, until about 34 weeks when I knew her lungs would have developed enough. But at 32 weeks, I couldn't lie any more: I could hardly breathe, as the liver tumours were pressing up against my lower lung, and the pain was impossible to conceal. I was forced to agree to an emergency c-section but would only go through with it when I knew that all the medics I trusted were present to operate.

I call them my warrior women, the team who performed that birth, delivering our daughter at 32 weeks last October to the tune of *Ocean Eyes* by Billie Eilish, whereupon she opened her own eyes and let out a massive scream. It was the most beautiful sound of my life. I lay back, swamped by a wave of relief. I've done it, I've done it.

We named her Magnolia Sunshine and once she was born, we were separated – her and Luke to the NICU, me to recover as quickly as possible so that, two weeks later, I could start a course of chemotherapy. From that moment, my days telescoped into a binary routine, by night, journeying into the natal intensive care unit to sit with my daughter, by day, journeying to the edge of my will to live.

Chemo makes you feel like your body is shutting down; the toxicity of it fooled my brain into telling my body it was dying. It made me want to give up.

I had been willing to die for her, but living for her now seemed almost too hard.

What kept me tethered to life was the relentlessness of my routine: it became totemic that I had to go and sit with her every night. I was obsessed with breastfeeding again, giving her that protection. But of course the chemo curdled my milk into a deadly poison so, every day, I focused that flickering will to live, pumping off my breast milk then dumping it, just to keep the milk coming in until I was off the chemo.

But I never breastfed again. Six weeks of chemo, a liver resection to remove half my liver in January, then a mop-up round of chemo, all the time with me asking how long I had to keep pumping and dumping until my milk was pure again. When the answer came, "Not for at least another six months" – casually given, as if the hope of feeding my baby hadn't been the one thing keeping me going – it broke me.

What was more, we weren't just broken, but broke. The NHS do incredible work around cancer but there is only so much they can do to support a family going through the fight. Having spent all our savings on second opinions pre-diagnosis and on the BRAF treatments not given under the NHS, we opted for private health insurance; but we had nothing left for anything else.

Both our families have helped us financially and our friends put together a JustGiving campaign. We need this to pay for the hundreds of pounds we have to spend on take-home medications each time I'm in hospital, for a night nurse to take care of Magnolia some nights, to meet the costs of taxis to and from treatment because my obliterated immune system (and the opiate pain meds) means I can't take the bus or drive.

> My mask of bravery slipped; I leant on a wall, legs shaking

In January this year, I was briefly cancer-free. The BRAF mutation usually spreads like wildfire so there was hope that the super-aggressive chemo had worked. Luke went back to work. I started to hope I might do what I craved to do: walking in the park, maybe even having that wedding. But a scan in March showed that the tumours had come back in both sides of my liver; that we had run out of ways to obliterate them; that from here on in, my treatment would be management not cure. I was terminal.

I'm 41 years old and I'm dying. I don't know how long I've got – a week, a month, a year. Nobody is talking about a decade.

My baby is now nine months old and the main fight left in me is to live as long as I can for her. More chemo, more surgery, whatever I can do to reclaim some quality of life and some measure of stability. Luke and I have our wedding planned in September but in June, two days before an op to reverse the stoma from the colostomy I had during pregnancy, we sneaked off and tied the knot, because if I died during that op, I wanted to die with his surname and that of our baby.

It's hard marrying someone to make them a widower but Luke is the love of my life, my person, my team-mate – and I know how strong he is. From the day of diagnosis to the day Magnolia was born, whenever I was in hospital he slept on the floor next to me every night, holding my hand. He calls me the most stubborn person he knows, but he's right up there and even though his life as a pilot makes it even harder for him to be a single dad, I know he'll make it work.

We called our baby Magnolia because even when the magnolia tree is dying it can still blossom. I've made years' worth of birthday cards for her right into adulthood, I've made videos for her and, every day, I send her emails for her to read when she's ready, discussing everything, from the big life issues to daily reflections: all the things I wish I could be around for when Magnolia needs a mother's advice. I've told Luke everything about a woman's body as she grows up so that he can pass that on when the time comes. I've even tried to hand over some hairstyling skills and I have to admit that he's been pretty good at learning those.

Now I just want to wave her off for her first day at school. And I want to teach her – and all other young girls like her – to fight, and never to apologise for fighting, to be the voice that refuses to be ignored.

Cancer does not play by the rules, so now colon cancer attacks young, fit, non-cancer-profile women like me. We have to be alert to cancer's tricks. It took three years of blood, sweat and pain for my cancer to be diagnosed; this cannot happen again.

So this is what I want to shout from the rooftops to every young woman who reads this, "Don't be brushed off. Don't let your pain be ignored. Be the pain in their ass, so you don't die from one in yours!"

If I can help even one woman avoid my gruelling journey of misdiagnosis and misinformation, then my story will have the legacy I want it to have and my fight can finally stop. ■

To donate to Haelwyn and family, go to justgiving.com/crowdfunding/haelwynmagnolia. For more information: bowelcanceruk.org.uk

SUPER SIZE MO

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN COMEDIAN MO GILLIGAN TOOK ON BIG CHICKEN

He went from folding jeans to comedy stardom thanks to high-profile fans like Drake. But Mo Gilligan's latest project is an investigation into Britain's £12 million a day fried chicken industry, and what it's doing to our bodies – including his when he eats out in chicken shops every meal for a month. Interview by Michael Odell

PORTRAIT Tom Jackson
STYLING Susie Lethbridge

Mo Gilligan, 38, photographed in Katie's Kitchen, Peckham, London

The comedian Mo Gilligan is something of an expert on "the ick". If a man overuses the affectionate descriptor "babe" or claps when a plane lands, then a sudden disruption in romantic feelings known among women as "the ick" may result. This I knew. But a man picking up a ping-pong ball? That's a new one on me.

"Definitely," Gilligan insists. "If a man playing ping-pong with a loved one starts scrabbling around on the floor to pick up a dropped ball, the woman is going to get the ick."

Apparently, it's almost as bad as putting on a T-shirt before your underwear in the morning, a look known as "the Winnie-the-Pooh".

"Just don't do it, man," he says. "Winnie-the-Pooh can go naked below the waist because he's a fictional bear, but there's something about a man wearing a shirt with all his stuff hanging out that can seriously undermine a relationship."

Gilligan has collected these stories from his global tours. He says it's the same in relationships across all cultures and classes, in the US, Australia and Europe.

"Sometimes the ick can be expressed in slightly different terms," Gilligan warns. Ah yes, careful not to scrabble for a ping-pong ball in front of your woman in the Caribbean. That's a total "pum pum lock-off", he says (pum pum is patois for vagina).

A decade ago Gilligan was folding jeans in a Levi's store in central London. He shot to fame in 2017 when the Canadian hip-hop superstar Drake quoted his comedy on his personal Instagram account (referencing a sketch that depicted a Cockney struggling in the heat, asking his girlfriend to bring him a couple of cans of lager – the catchphrase "coupla cans" duly went viral). Then, after a sell-out stand-up tour, Gilligan was snapped up to co-present Channel 4's *The Big Narstie Show* (with the eponymous south London grime star) and then host his own, *The Lateish Show* – winning Baftas for both.

His three Netflix comedy specials (*Momentum* in 2019, *There's Mo to Life* in 2022 and this year's *In the Moment*) have made him an international star. The acclaimed American comedian Kevin Hart is a fan and mentor, and Gilligan has appeared on the same bill as the legends Eddie Murphy and Dave Chappelle.

"Of course, it could mess with your head going from folding jeans and encouraging people to sniff candles [Gilligan also worked in a Jo Malone store], but I was an ordinary guy struggling for long enough to keep me grounded."

Which maybe explains his latest career choice. When the broadcaster Louis Theroux declared himself a fan and asked Gilligan what he fancied doing next, the comedian had an idea.

"Louis' TV work is obviously inspirational, but I was also blown away by his wife, Nancy [Theroux and the TV producer Nancy Strang run a production company called Mindhouse]. I thought, is this the moment to take a big emotional risk?"

How often do you see a young black man in floods of tears on TV? And no, not in a drama, but alone in a hotel room, seeking answers and desperate for help. That's what you get in Gilligan's new Netflix show.

What has upset him? Chicken.

"Big chicken," he corrects. "This thing is absolutely massive, bro."

Big Chicken: A Fast Food Conspiracy is Gilligan's deep-dive into the grim, often startling, yet emotionally complex world of fast food fried chicken. We meet at Katie's Kitchen in Peckham, south London, near where Gilligan grew up. Born to a Welsh mum and a Rastafarian dad, he used to come here after school with his friends.

"We were connoisseurs," he recalls. "We knew Katie's chicken was better than Morley's [a fried chicken chain], but maybe you got more chips somewhere else."

Today at Katie's you can buy one piece of chicken for £1.70, or have it with chips for £3. The shop sits on a parade next to a money transfer shop, a vape shop and a library. It's not so far from Streatham, where, in 2024, Harry Wallop investigated for The Times a 3.8-mile stretch of road heading towards Croydon with 29 fried chicken shops on it.

"When I was a kid that would've been my heaven," Gilligan says, shrugging.

After Katie's we walk a few hundred yards to Tola, an upscale bar and nightclub, indicative of a more bougie, affluent Peckham than the one Gilligan knew 25 years ago. However, he's in a nostalgic mood.

"I grew up loving this food," he says. "But I had no idea that the area I grew up in probably qualified as a food desert [an area where fresh fruit and vegetables are hard to find] and that fried chicken was effectively grooming me."

The facts are startling. In the UK we spend £12 million on fried chicken a day, and 95 per cent of the meat used comes from the one billion factory-farmed chickens killed in this country each year. These "broilers" are sometimes called "frankenchickens", since they are fast-bred to become plump within six weeks before being slaughtered (a chicken's natural lifespan is six to ten years). Often reared in cramped conditions – the RSPCA claims factory chickens live in a space roughly the equivalent of a piece of A4 paper – they can suffer a range of health issues such as contact dermatitis (ammonia burns from living in their own faeces) and green muscle disease (when a bird's breast grows so large that, without sufficient blood vessels, it goes green due to dead tissue).

And none of this takes into account the downstream effects of factory farming: one contributor to Gilligan's documentary estimates that 75 per cent of the world's antibiotics are used in intensive farming (this includes animals other than chickens). When the meat from these animals is ingested by humans, antibiotic efficacy is reduced, making the return of old diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia more likely. Then, of course, there are the environmental consequences.

"It's pretty bad in America," Gilligan says. "I visited the Mountaire Farms chicken plant in Millsboro, Delaware [which "de-bones" 1.8 million chickens a week]. People in the town can't bathe in their own bathwater because it's polluted."

For his investigation Gilligan agrees to eat fried chicken for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day for a month. At first he enjoys it. That crunch. The moist flesh. Those glutinous dipping sauces. Sometimes he can even forget what he has seen in the chicken sheds.

"It's like the neuralyzer in that film *Men in Black* [a device that makes you forget the recent past]. You forget the

With his partner, Taia Tulher, in 2025

'I GREW UP LOVING THIS FOOD. I HAD NO IDEA FRIED CHICKEN WAS EFFECTIVELY GROOMING ME'

PREVIOUS SPREAD: GROOMING: IRYNA TRETIAK AT DAVID ARTISTS USING CHANEL LES BEIGES COLLECTION AND NO1 DE CHANEL BODY SERUM-IN-MIST. YELLOW TOP AND TROUSERS, HUGOBOSS.COM. SHOES, GRENSON.COM. WITH THANKS TO TOLA PECKHAM. THIS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY

In his Netflix documentary, Big Chicken: A Fast Food Conspiracy

‘I COULD PREDICT THE PHYSICAL IMPACT, BUT THE MENTAL EFFECTS WERE A SHOCK’

smell of ammonia that goes in your nostrils and through the back of your head, because [of] the food – with the crunch and the greasy flesh and salt. All the dopamine comes rushing in.”

Right outside Katie’s is an electronic billboard. The ads scroll through burger and ice cream deals to KFC’s World Cup offer: a Football Double Bucket for £20.99. It shows a well-dressed white woman, her two immaculately manicured hands reaching for chips and fried chicken.

“Let’s be honest, she doesn’t look like your typical fried chicken customer,” Gilligan says. “It’s cheap food eaten all over the country by all types of people. But mostly those people will be working class, and yes, a lot of them will be black people.”

Gilligan’s documentary explores the painful history and racist ideas around black people and fried chicken. The classic recipe has its roots in American slavery. Since chickens were often the only livestock slaves were allowed to keep, the meat became a delicacy when cooked with thyme, garlic, paprika and bay leaf, sometimes with sweet potato, since this served as a decent stand-in for the African yam. The dish eventually became an important component of African-American “soul food”, but it was the likes of the Kentucky Fried Chicken founder, Colonel Sanders (he was actually a petrol station owner who perfected pressure-cooking chicken), who made it a successful fast food enterprise in the Fifties.

That’s what makes Gilligan’s experience so powerful. Despite being eaten widely (there are more KFC restaurants in China than anywhere else in the world), fried chicken is still very emotive in the black community.

“When I told friends I was going to be eating fried chicken on TV, they were like, ‘Raah! For real, bro?’ There is an uncomfortable feeling for a black man eating chicken in the media.”

In 2019 David Lammy, then Labour MP for Tottenham, criticised a Tory government anti-gang strategy, #KnifeFree, that targeted fried chicken shops. “Is this some kind of joke?! Why have you chosen chicken shops? What’s next, #KnifeFree watermelons?” he raged on Twitter.

“I get it,” Gilligan says. “The difficult connotations are still there. At the same time, a lot of working-class black people grow up with this food because eating healthily is often out of their reach.”

Fried chicken can have serious health consequences for the black community, since they are particularly susceptible to type 2 diabetes (fried chicken’s saturated fat and high carbohydrate content can contribute to blood-sugar spikes). Gilligan’s diabetes risk score was tested by a doctor before he ate his 84 consecutive portions; afterwards it was raised significantly. He also starts to feel sluggish, bloated and tired and has problems farting “like some trumpet”, not to mention putting on 6.6lb.

Film-maker Morgan Spurlock in Super Size Me, 2004

“The physical impact was maybe predictable,” he says. “But the mental symptoms were a shock.”

In Arkansas, Gilligan interviews an undocumented factory worker with deformed fingers caused by catching thousands of chickens a day by hand. He also hears that some workers wear nappies on the processing line, since they are denied bathroom breaks.

That evening, alone in his hotel room eating another fried chicken meal, Gilligan starts sobbing. “I’m eating this chicken and I’m going mad,” he says at one point.

It looks like he’s breaking down.

“I started to feel depressed,” he tells me. “It actually felt like fried chicken was changing my personality.”

A food chemist tells him how the whole fried chicken experience is designed: that first “crunch” is intended to trigger the brain’s reward centres and not let go. A psychologist at the University of Michigan explains how hyper-palatable foods can create an addictive pull comparable with cocaine, where “withdrawal” manifests in depression, anxiety, sluggishness, bloating, insomnia, digestive difficulties and fluid retention.

“I feel a bit disappointed in myself for not realising this food is sort of ‘evil genius’, isn’t it?” Gilligan says. “I mean, it’s cheap food that has the power to control you.”

We’ve been here before. In 2004 the American film-maker Morgan Spurlock investigated America’s skyrocketing obesity statistics by only eating food from the fast food behemoth McDonald’s for a month. The resulting film, *Super Size Me*, showed him gaining 1st 10lb and experiencing mood swings and sexual dysfunction issues (later, Spurlock investigated “big chicken”. He died of cancer in 2024, aged 53.)

Gilligan saw *Super Size Me* as a teenager. “That made me sit up and take notice about burgers,” he says. “But chicken is cheaper and, in young people’s eyes, cooler.”

Between them McDonald’s (which now sells as much chicken as beef) and KFC plan to spend £2.5 billion in the UK in the next few years. Meanwhile, the American chicken chains Popeyes and Dave’s Hot Chicken are expanding their UK footprints too. And yes, the latter certainly has pretensions to being cool: it is backed by investors such as Drake, the actor Samuel L Jackson and the R&B singer Usher.

Gilligan’s documentary shows members of the Kardashian family promoting fried chicken (in 2020 Kim Kardashian promoted a range of KFC platform Crocs featuring a fried chicken drumstick charm). He knows what it’s like to be offered a lucrative promo deal: Gilligan has advertised for Nando’s.

“I am part of the problem,” he says, shrugging. “I am not just that guy posting funny videos on social media any more. ➨

Up to $400 onboard credit*

Times+ members save £100^

Queen Mary 2's Literature Festival at Sea 2027

December 2, 2027 • Seven nights' fly-cruise

Inside from **£1,389pp** • Balcony from **£1,739pp** • Grill Suite from **£3,889pp**

Queen Mary 2's Literature Festival at Sea brings together authors, journalists and critics for a week-long celebration of the written word.

Find yourself in literary heaven – surrounded by authors, journalists, historians, and fellow book lovers – on this seven-night sailing dedicated to the power of the pen. Curated by the programming team of The Times and Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival, this unique voyage celebrates the written word in its many forms.

Enjoy a daily dose of news from Times journalists, lose yourself in thought-provoking conversation at Q&A sessions, meet your favourite writers at intimate book signings, and listen as literary greats dissect everything from art and film to history and politics. You could fill every day onboard with themed activities and events. And that's on top of exploring the range of enriching Cunard experiences you can already look forward to. Spend your week at sea embracing a world of literature and indulgence, thanks to delicious dining, relaxing spa treatments, and a generous cocktail menu with something for everyone.

Guests include BBC news presenter Sophie Raworth, Sunday Times bestselling author and broadcaster Natalie Haynes, award-winning author and historian Colin Grant, professor of global history at Oxford University Peter Frankopan, Sunday Times and New York Times bestselling author Jenny Colgan, international crime and thriller author Linwood Barclay, broadcaster and entertainer Pam Ayres, and restaurant critic Charlotte Ivers, with many more names to be announced.

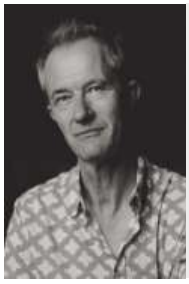
THE TIMES | THE SUNDAY TIMES | TIMES RADIO
Cheltenham Literature Festival

ABTA PROTECTED 6294

What's included

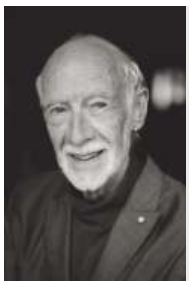
- Seven-night transatlantic crossing aboard Cunard's Queen Mary 2 from New York to Southampton
- Economy-class flight from the UK to New York
- All meals and entertainment
- Programme of literary talks and workshops throughout the voyage**
- Complimentary money to spend onboard*
- An invitation to an exclusive onboard reception when you book direct with Times Holidays
- Times+ members receive an extra £100 off^. Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for your unique code

Special guests onboard



Geoff Dyer
Award-winning genre-blurring British author, Royal Society Fellow, and former USC Writer in Residence.

Peter Hain
Anti-apartheid campaigner, former UK Cabinet Minister, and prolific political thriller novelist.



Roger McGough
Legendary Liverpool poet, chart-topping 1960s performer, and BBC Radio 4 broadcaster.

Call 0808 134 4157 or visit thetimes.com/th-litfest2027

TIMES Holidays

Terms and conditions apply. Prices shown are per person, correct at the time of print and, unless otherwise specified, based on double occupancy. Offers and bookings are subject to availability and suppliers reserve the right to withdraw at any time. See supplier website for full offer terms and conditions. ^£100 off Times+ offer applicable to each Times Holidays booking made by December 31, 2026 with a minimum spend of £2,000 when quoting your unique Times+ code. Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for full terms and conditions. *Cunard onboard credit offer applicable to bookings made by August 31, 2026. **Programme of Literature Festival at Sea talks are included in your fare. Literature Festival at Sea workshops will be at an additional charge and are available to book on board. Other activities may incur an additional charge. Speakers and onboard activities are subject to change. This holiday is sold by Times Holidays as an agent for Cunard and protected under ATOL 6294. For full booking conditions, visit thetimes.com/holidays/terms-and-conditions.

I have a platform, especially with young people, and that comes with responsibilities."

In 2025 his friend, the British grime star Stormzy, promoted a "Stormzy meal" for McDonald's (nine chicken nuggets, fries, a Sprite Zero and an Oreo McFlurry). Gilligan references this in his documentary, along with promo work done for KFC by the British YouTube personality Niko Omilana (Omilana performs pranks for his eight million subscribers).

In 2021 Omilana appeared in KFC's "Behind the Bucket" publicity campaign, which aimed to highlight the company's supposedly enviable welfare standards. We see him visiting the vast chicken shed of a KFC poultry supplier and admiring the well-spaced chicks. However, Gilligan's documentary shows us footage of other similar fast-growing chickens elsewhere when they are 33 days old.

Has he spoken to Stormzy about his McDonald's deal? Online speculation suggests he was paid £4.4 million for it.

"I know Stormzy but I don't think I can tell him anything he doesn't already know. The truth is, we are pawns in a much bigger game," he says.

In the documentary there's a cringeworthy scene in which Richard Griffiths of the British Poultry Council agrees to meet Gilligan. He won't do so at one of the chicken processing plants he represents, citing access problems, only at a cute-looking city farm with seemingly happy animals wandering around.

"There is hunger in this country," Griffiths says. "Fundamentally, until we get everybody fed, nothing else really matters."

When I ask Gilligan about this, he laughs and says, "I don't think he was ever going to convince me he was doing this out of the goodness of his heart. But you know what? At least he turned up. Most people I tried to talk to wouldn't meet or even pick up the phone."

There's another telling scene where he and a friend call the KFC head office. Someone answers, puts their side of the phone on mute but hangs around to eavesdrop on Gilligan and his friend's conversation. When Gilligan rumbles them, they hang up.

"Big chicken, bro," he says. "What are they hiding?"

Perhaps the tide is turning. In April the UK's largest ever environmental pollution claim went to the High Court. One of the UK's largest chicken producers, Avara Foods (which processes about a quarter of a billion chickens a year), along with Welsh Water, stand accused of polluting the rivers Wye, Lugg and Usk along the Wales/England border with chicken waste and sewage spills. In its defence, Avara Foods said the allegations were "misconceived" and that it was "confident in our position and believe the claim is unsupported by any proper scientific basis," while Welsh Water said the case was "misguided". The case is ongoing. In February there was outrage too when KFC and other big players such as Burger King, Nando's and Wagamama withdrew from the Better Chicken Commitment, which would have involved using slower-growing breeds, not to mention offering chickens more space and light, plus humane slaughter. Instead, these companies initiated the rival Sustainable Chicken Forum – they run this alliance between them, offering no such commitments.

"Who doesn't want cheap food in the current climate?" Gilligan muses. "But when you've seen what I've seen, especially in America, you know putting too much of that meat inside you can't be good."

In Katie's Kitchen, Peckham

'I'M NOT JUST THAT GUY POSTING FUNNY VIDEOS NOW. I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES'

Gilligan hasn't eaten fried chicken for eight months. In fact, it's not a big part of his life any more. His success means he has moved out of south London to a leafy north London enclave and is in the middle of a world tour.

His most recent Netflix comedy special, *In the Moment*, draws on the high life he recently experienced in LA. American TV executives hoping to sign Gilligan provided him with a personal driver. His tight-knit circle of school and university friends (the "mandem") were even flown out to keep him company. At one nightclub they were all ushered to the front of the VIP queue – before being charged $5,000 for a bottle of tequila.

So, confronting big chicken feels like a brave move. After all, Gilligan could be just another celeb turning a blind eye and signing a lucrative promo deal.

"Thing is, I'm 38 now," he says. "Also, I'm a dad."

After a long-term relationship with the actress Sophie Wise (who played Carly Bradley in *Hollyoaks*), the couple split in 2022, and in 2024 Gilligan had a son, Rudi, with the model Selina Christoforou. However, the relationship didn't last, and Gilligan is now engaged to the model Taia Tulher; last summer she gave birth to their daughter.

"I love being a father," he says, beaming. "I love playing with my children and I've even started gardening. Gardening brings you closer to nature, which brings you closer to proper cooking. I recently made a slow-roasted shoulder of lamb for my family – real cooking which I was actually quite proud of."

When Gilligan illustrates seasoning his lamb joint, he shuffles his hands around like the Seventies comic Tommy Cooper just before using his catchphrase "just like that". In fact, just like that.

"I will never tell people less fortunate than me what they should buy or eat because I know what it's like when you're struggling," he says. "But at the same time, when you've lost your mind because of fried chicken, you know it's time to stop."

In less than ten years Gilligan has gone from a guy folding jeans to a global comedy star. In another few years he will be picking up his kids from school. What will he do if they demand to go to a chicken shop?

"I will educate them to make better choices," he says solemnly. But then he becomes Mo Gilligan again. "Actually, nah, forget that. I'll drag them away from the chicken shop and say, 'That's gonna give you the ick. Come home for Daddy's proper cooking.'" ■

Big Chicken: A Fast Food Conspiracy is on Netflix from August 5

TOP: LABRUMLONDON.COM. T-SHIRT, PERCIVALCLO.COM

Left: Lady Violet Manners, her sisters Lady Alice Manners and Lady Eliza Manners, and Lady Kitty Spencer at Milan Fashion Week in 2018. Below left: with Spencer in 2016. Below: with Nicky Haslam in 2017

THE (very) POSH PARTY GIRL WHO BECAME A (very trad) VISCOUNTESS

Lady Violet Manners is no stranger to scandal – she's the great-granddaughter of the Duchess of Argyll, whose divorce shocked Sixties Britain. Now she's living in her (second) stately pile and a poster girl for the British aristocracy. By Danielle Lawler

Viscount and Viscountess Garnock at home in the Scottish Lowlands. Portrait: Muir Vidler

She used to be Lady Violet Manners, the oldest of five siblings, including three sisters – each beautiful, outspoken and notorious. The children of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland were raised in the 19th-century Belvoir (pronounced "beaver") Castle in Leicestershire and in their twenties the girls became known to the press, a bit waggishly, as "Bad Manners".

She is now Viscountess Garnock, having married a Scottish viscount, William Garnock, last June, a three-day spectacular that was featured in Vogue (Hello! magazine called it the society wedding of the year).

"Ugh. I was just thinking the other day about how nice it is that no one calls us that any more. Bad manners, no manners. It was not representative of who we were," Garnock, 32, says of the whirl that was her twenties – the house parties with Bryan Ferry's son, Otis, walking the catwalk for Dolce & Gabbana alongside Princess Diana's niece Lady Kitty Spencer, landing a modelling deal with Burberry.

"Yes, we knew how to have a good time and there was no shame in that, but we were working really hard too. I think all three of us were slightly taken aback with the interest in us at first. It felt uncomfortable. But then we embraced it. What 22-year-old doesn't want to go to a Matthew Williamson show?"

It's all change now. The views from her kitchen window are of the rolling fields of Fife to Leven beach below, an hour's drive from the closest city of Edinburgh.

"I've been without a cleaner since we moved in six months ago. When I was dusting I thought, 'Gosh, you're going to think we're so vain.' We have so many wedding pictures," Garnock says.

At a glance I count eight wedding photos in the kitchen and drawing room, with its plump Nicky Haslam-covered sofas and well-stocked drinks trolley, and more upstairs, where a huge Phoebe Dickinson portrait of Violet and her sisters, Lady Alice and Lady Eliza, in Belvoir hangs in the hallway.

Her great-grandmother was Margaret Campbell, Duchess of Argyll, portrayed by Claire Foy in the 2021 BBC series *A Very British Scandal*, a true story of how she was publicly shamed in a high society divorce that gripped the nation in the Sixties. Belvoir, which has appeared in *The Crown*, has more than 320 rooms including a nightclub, where Kate Moss partied and Elizabeth Hurley has hit the karaoke, called Dadda-Bells. ("I called it that as a joke. I didn't think the name would stick," she says.)

For the wedding, Garnock wore the 18th-century Rutland tiara and a bespoke Phillipa Lepley gown with lace stars, a celestial tribute to Margaret, whose Norman Hartnell wedding dress was, unusually for the time, embroidered with stars. ("I've got her monogrammed suitcases upstairs with her Christian Dior mink berets. She had such great style," she says of her ancestor.)

When we meet, the couple are preparing for the arrival of their first child. Garnock is almost eight months pregnant and working flat out between London, the US and Scotland for her new company, HeritageXplore, and rushing to renovate not only their marital home, but also a holiday let before the baby arrives. (Their son, John, was born last month.)

"I have never been so productive as I have these past months," she says with a smile. Her eyes sparkle despite surviving on "around three hours' sleep".

"She is always going 100 miles an hour," William, also known as Bill, says. A huge Buffalo Bill poster, a wedding present from Garnock's mother, Emma, hangs on the wall of their shared home office (a nod to how Bill is nicknamed the Caledonian Cowboy for the years he spent living in Texas). From there he runs his entrepreneurial endeavour, Feragaia, Scotland's first distilled alcohol-free spirit, voted by the New York Times as the best non-alcoholic drink for 2026.

He used to work in whisky but "needed something healthier", she says. Their reason for working so hard? "To pay school fees," she says bluntly. "I'd love our child to go to boarding school like we did, but who knows if they will even be around." Her alma mater, Queen Margaret's School, York, closed after

Noël Coward and the Duchess of Argyll in 1960

'I'D LOVE OUR CHILD TO GO TO BOARDING SCHOOL LIKE WE DID'

The Duke and Duchess of Rutland at Belvoir in 2007 with their five children

125 years in 2025 after the government introduced its private school tax raid.

"I'm not a fan," Garnock says, grimacing, of the Labour Party. She has yet to decide her political leaning. Despite once saying she would like to be the next Margaret Thatcher ("She was from our local town, Grantham, so I grew up with everyone being very positive about her, I know that wasn't the case everywhere"), standing to be an MP is, she says, "not on my horizon. You have to be bloody brave and have earned your stripes."

Garnock does, however, have strong views. She once called the National Trust "too woke", when standing in its advisory council elections in 2023. She got "around 47,000 votes for the role, which is probably more than most MPs at a local election. That's not to toot my horn, but to say a lot of people did agree with what I was saying, more than I thought."

She is against changes in the hereditary peerage system, something she posts about on Instagram – one of many topics she doesn't mind risking being cancelled to support, including trail hunting, small businesses and farmers' rights among others. "If Sir Keir Starmer or whoever has put you in [the Lords], I don't care who you are, you feel indebted to that person," she says, of nominated peers. "Whereas there's this kind of wonderful, dare I say, irreverence to someone that's been generationally, and unknowingly, elected by their peers."

Bill's father, James Randolph Lindesay-Bethune, the 16th Earl of Lindsay, was a junior minister under John Major and recently lost his seat in the House of Lords after 36 years. Garnock continues: "It feels like there's such a desire to homogenise this country right now. And I really strongly believe it's our eccentricity that makes our country so unbelievably desirable to the rest of the world. Trail hunting is a massive part of that. Shooting is the lifeblood of rural economies, employing thousands

STYLING: DARIA BIHUN WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO JACKIE MATHESON FROM JOSEPH EDINBURGH. MAKE-UP: ANA CRUZALEGUI USING ELEMIS AND NARS. HAIR: GARY LEES USING ELEVEN AUSTRALIA SCOTLAND. PREVIOUS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK. THIS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY

Lady Violet, her mother, Emma, and Lady Alice at Belvoir in 2015

of people. It's so easy to be in the city watching David Attenborough and completely misunderstand what it means to really be a part of the countryside. I'd love to introduce them to the people who work on the land – they would come back with a very changed opinion."

By any estimation, Garnock's childhood was privileged and gilded – yet it was also a rural one, far removed from the glamour of London. When she moved to the capital aged 18, she had nowhere to live. "So I stayed in a hostel near Euston that was owned by a charity my mum was working with. I remember her bringing a little pink fridge for my room."

Around this time her parents separated, yet remained in the same castle – in separate wings with new partners. Was it strange? "I remember Nicky Haslam saying to me when I was 18, 'Darling, there is nothing unusual about this. The French have been doing it for years.' Mum and Dad make a great team, and there is a lot of love and respect there. It was just their marriage that didn't work," she says.

There is history between the Garnocks and Manners – as is often the case in the peerage. In the 18th century Bill's distant ancestor, a Violet Lindsay, from Fife, went to Belvoir to marry Henry Manners, the 8th Duke of Rutland, becoming the first Violet Manners.

"Now in 2026 I have moved back here. We have similar pictures of Violet hanging in both houses. Isn't that wonderful?" she says. "Can we make it clear, we are not related," he adds with a laugh.

They didn't meet until William's sister, Charlotte, the Duchess of Noto, set them up at a New Year party in 2023 at the family home in Kirkcaldy, just ten minutes away. Six months later, after a long-distance courtship between London and Texas, William asked Violet to marry him in the Rocky Mountains, wearing his trademark stetson hat, now hanging in the front porch along with a collection

'THERE'S A PRACTICALITY TO PRIMOGENITURE. IT KIND OF WORKS'

of cowboy boots. There was no question where the married couple would settle. As the oldest son, William will inherit the title of the Earl of Lindsay and with it the family seat, Lahill House, and the Kilconquhar estate in Fife. "I feel a sense of duty knowing that my family has been in the area for generations. It has shaped who I am. Why would I try and build a life anywhere else?" he says.

Having spent the past 15 years between Notting Hill in London and Belvoir, Violet's friends worried about her move to the Scottish countryside. "But I love it here," she says waving her arms towards the fields. Having both grown up with four siblings, plus staff and visitors inhabiting their estates, there is a novelty of living together. "We swung by Belvoir a couple of weeks ago for Dad's birthday and Mum was upstairs hosting a dinner party for top interior designers from America and Australia," she says. "That's Belvoir, it's so much fun. But I love coming back here, shutting the door and knowing there isn't anyone else here – just us."

The duchess was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2024. "It was tough seeing her go through that," says Violet. "I'm just glad she's had the all-clear. I've told her to live her life, take five holidays in three months if she wants. She's done so much for Belvoir and us kids, it is her time now."

Like her husband, Garnock is the oldest sibling. But as primogeniture laws state, her younger brother, Charles, will inherit the dukedom of Rutland and Belvoir Castle. Having been in favour of the ancient custom, has that changed now her own child is on the way?

"Mum would say, we're all feminists, and not with a soft 'f'. But equally, there's a practicality to primogeniture. You can look throughout the centuries and just say, it kind of works. I've had the best of both worlds. Babies don't get to select you. It's a freak accident that I joined my family and had the biggest treat in the entire world to grow up in Belvoir. I just want to support my brother Charles and make sure he has the best chance of success for his tenure."

The idea for HeritageXplore, a sort of members' club to rival the National Trust but with a heftier membership fee and lots of perks, came about after interviewing chatelaines for her podcast, *Hidden Heritage*. Garnock saw an opportunity to attract the *Bridgerton* generation and help stately homes not only survive but thrive. "Gen Z wants so much more from going to a historic house than walking round an immaculate room," she says. "My goal has always been, 'How can I inspire the next generation to spend time in these heritage places?'" She wants to use glossy YouTube videos to showcase historic homes and put on events such as comedy nights, a nod to the days of court jesters. She hosts Luxe tours, where guests can pay upwards of £6,000 to have exclusive access to magnificent houses and their owners.

She wants to keep the family estate and others going. "I'm not in it for a smash and grab. For me these places have been standing for 1,000 years, they're going to hopefully stand for 1,000 more, and I want to be part of that journey. We have also launched a membership club, I think the first of its kind since the National Trust, which is very exciting."

Did she get any backlash for calling the National Trust woke? "I did, funnily enough," she says. "There are parts of our history I really hate, but my point was you want to make sure everyone makes their own informed decision on how they feel about it. It might spark rage, joy or creativity, but let people feel it. We don't need to tell people about how they should feel towards history." She met the chief operating officer of the National Trust afterwards and all was forgiven.

"Fundamentally, the foundation that the National Trust was built on is incredible. I mean, thank God they were around to save all these amazing places, and thank God they still are. I just think the key is not to get dragged into politics."

She is planning just "a few weeks off," for maternity leave. Her back-to-work plan is all mapped out. "The train line runs from Edinburgh to London via Grantham, so I'm planning to stop off, hand the baby to Mum and carry on to London for meetings. She will love it." ■

heritagexplore.com; feragaia.com

Eating out
Giles Coren

‘My steak managed, bizarrely, to be both chewy and entirely flavourless. Like eating a sweaty thigh pad’

TOM JACKSON, COURTESY OF BEEFY'S

Beefy’s by Lord Botham, Southampton

It is often said in this business that you go to a restaurant the first time for the food, but you come back for the service. Which is why, if I ever go back to Beefy’s by Lord Botham at the Utilita Bowl in Southampton – which is by no means certain – it will be for Magda, Brittany and George. And them alone. For they were marvellous. Nothing else was.

Let’s start with the name. Beefy’s by Lord Botham at the Utilita Bowl. It used to be called the Rose Bowl, a perfectly nice name for a cricket ground, which is what it is, home of Hampshire CCC. But Utilita Bowl? That sounds like something a nurse invites you to be sick in. Or worse. It certainly doesn’t sound like something you’d want to eat from. And it isn’t.

But that’s what they call it, and it’s where the cricket was. Specifically, the fifth T20 international between India and England, for which my friend Remus, father of Sam’s best friend, Hayden, had bought tickets for us all and in return for which I was sorting lunch. Which brings us to the “Beefy’s” part of it. For that, of course, refers to Ian “Beefy” Botham, the England cricketer I will always regard as the greatest of all time – although he wasn’t – because he was in his prime when I was 12 years old. He was “my Hornby and my Barlow long ago”, and the reason I fell in love with the game.

But do you want to eat in a restaurant named after a cricketer, even (or especially) one of notorious “appetites” who was often several stone overweight at the wicket, featuring a menu “inspired by his favourite dishes”? I’m not sure.

I’m also not sure why it’s in Southampton. Botham played for Somerset, Worcestershire and Durham but set foot in Hampshire only as a visiting opponent. And why is a restaurant launched in 2015 as “Beefy’s” now called “Beefy’s by Lord Botham”? Why the weird snobby upgrade?

Botham is apparently a stickler for the use of his titles – when knighted in 2007, he is said to have insisted, unlike more relaxed sporting sirs, that his title be used by commentary box colleagues at Sky – so I wonder if after his ennoblement in 2020, he insisted that the restaurant be ennobled too, lest people forget?

If it was, it was not for services to food. Although, as I said, the service at Beefy’s was heroic. If in a losing cause. It began with a courteous email from George Greatbatch, F&B manager at the Hilton Utilita Bowl, wherein Beefy’s by Lord Botham resides, to tell me that despite my having booked my table at Beefy’s many weeks before, I would not be able to eat there on account of there being a cricket match on. Which I knew, because it was why I had booked. It is surely the only reason anyone would ever book.

Alas, Beefy's was being used for hospitality, George explained. But not to worry, the full Beefy's menu would be served at the Lakeview Bar and Terrace instead, just across the hall, which has a view of the golf course. Unlike Beefy's by Lord Botham, which only has a view of the boring old cricket pitch, where the match we had come 100 miles to watch was being played.

At the door of the Hilton, we were directed towards the Lakeview Bar where Brittany showed us to our seats in a grey corporate reception space with a window onto brown grass where fat men in polo shirts were hacking at the ground with clubs. Whether they were gardeners, vole exterminators or amateur golfers, I couldn't tell you. I'm not sure there's much difference.

Then Magda appeared with ice-cold pints of lager for us, water for the boys, and shiny black menus with fancy gold writing on about the "legendary Lord Ian Botham". There actually weren't that many dishes on it and what there were, were pure 'Spoons: cheesy nachos, baked camembert, filo prawns, pork bites (!), chicken pasta (!), fish and chips... and a short wine-list featuring a "signature" selection of Botham's own wines.

Picking our way carefully, we ordered "Warm breads" for Hayden (who is a little risk averse – justifiably in this case) and "Beefy's soup" for Sam, which was leek and potato. Remus and I respectively (and rather bravely) ordered the "Baked aubergine with miso" and "Crab and tomatoes" from the "Signature" section. Then it was the signature Beefy's Beef Burger (£19.50) for the boys, and for us the signature Bone in Beef Ribeye Steak for two (at £95 for 525g). Lord Botham is quite free with his signature, you will notice.

"And a bottle of the signature Sir Ian Botham shiraz, please" I said, pointing to it on the list and wondering why it was still only a knight, when this awful dining room was a mighty lord.

"We don't have that one," said Magda.

"You don't have Sir Ian Botham's signature shiraz?" I roared. "What am I to drink with my signature Beefy's Bone in Beefy Beef Ribeye of Beef by Beefy?"

"We only have his chardonnay," said Magda. And I couldn't order that with a steak, so I ordered a bottle of their £47 graves instead – aeroplane wine, just about drinkable with ice in. So here I was, not in Beefy's by Lord Botham, not drinking Sir Ian Botham's shiraz. It's like showing up to a Test match in 1985 and Botham is out for a duck, then bowls like shit – which did happen from time to time.

My starter was chunks of tomato with three quenelles of gritty fish paste my cat would pass on, while Remus had three cold, grey things curled up under some coconut and spring onions.

"How is it?" I asked.

"Worst thing I've ever eaten," said Remus. And Remus is from Norfolk. Not even Norwich. Like, small-town Norfolk.

Sam ate his soup; Hayden ate his warm bread. They're good boys. And they both ate their burgers, which did look okay. And Sam said it was in his top ten of all-time burgers. Which at £19.50 it bloody should have been. The skin-on fries were generic and also fine.

As for the ribeye, well, you make a choice with steak, don't you? If you want it super-tender but aren't too bothered with flavour, then you go fillet. If you prioritise flavour, and are prepared to chew a bit, you go sirloin or even bavette. But with a ribeye you get maximum flavour and maximum tenderness from a muscle well marbled with fat.

Not at Beefy's by Lord Botham, you don't. For the two slabs of meat they presented to us, 1970s-style, on a board with halved tomatoes, watercress and deep-fried onion rings, managed to be both chewy as hell and entirely flavourless. Like eating a sweaty thigh pad.

How do you fail so badly with a ribeye? It's the wanker's cut. Unscrewupable. You just buy a well-farmed, aged piece of meat, give it 90 seconds a side on a smoking griddle and a ten-minute rest. And you get blackened, medium-rare, juicy results every time. This was like the steak Stan Laurel used to resole his shoe in *Way Out West*. Except Stan then got chased by hungry dogs, which I didn't. I guess because the local dogs had eaten at Beefy's before.

But you know what? When the game started, George sorted us out with wristbands so we could come and go through the exclusive door intended for Beefy's patrons only, and when the queue at the bar was so long it was taking people an hour to get a drink, Magda slipped behind and poured secret pints for us, and Brittany smoothed our afternoon along beautifully, and England won with Joss Butler getting his highest ever T20I score in a world record second wicket partnership that took England to number one in the world T20I rankings. And we were cock-a-hoop. But if he ever opens a restaurant called "Jossy's by His Royal Highness the Earl of Butlershire", I will be giving it a very wide berth indeed. ■

Beefy's by Lord Botham
The Hilton, Utilita Bowl, Botley Road, Southampton (023 8202 7097; utilitabowl.com/beefys)
Cooking 0
Room 2
Service 8
Cricket 10
Score 5
Price My bill for four was about £300. Shocking for food this ropey.

SPECIAL READERS OFFER

Seven Sock Sunshine Selection

HJ HEEL & TOE SOFTOP® SOCKS

only £35 for a Pack of 7 Pairs

Your Summer Sock Drawer Sorted

The Original HJ Softop® Socks are the ultimate comfort sock for men. Thanks to clever knitting techniques, they stay in place without the need for elastic, leaving no unsightly marks and are ideal for those with circulatory problems. This pack of seven pairs, in seven seasonal colours is exclusively available to Peter Christian customers.

- 75% cotton / 25% polyamide - One size 6-11
- Unique British patented design endorsed by The Institute of Chiropodists & Podiatrists
- Ventilated foot panels for cool comfort
- HJ unconditional 6 months guarantee
- No Quibble Money Back Guarantee*

SHOP NOW

Order HJ Softop® Sock Pack (MA89)
Use code **16E32** for **FREE P&P**

peterchristian.co.uk

Call us 01273 493 393 Weekdays 9-5pm Weekends 10-3pm

Order by post – Cheques payable to Peter Christian.
Quote **16E32** and send to: Freepost PETER CHRISTIAN

Go Online or Call for a Free Catalogue

Trustpilot

"These socks are so comfortable and soft. They are easy to care for and extremely good value. Recommended."

William, Lincolnshire

FREE DELIVERY & RETURNS* Enter 16E32 at checkout

7 pairs in 7 colours
Heather, Navy, Sky, Forest, Sand, Burgundy, Sage

ENDORSED BY THE INSTITUTE of PODIATRISTS

*Free UK delivery (normally £5) ends midnight 01/10/26. £35 Minimum spend applies. Free returns within the UK only and subject to items being in perfect condition, in their original packaging and returned within 30 days. A Division of Hills of Bramley Ltd. Co Reg No 04767802

PETER CHRISTIAN
GENTLEMEN'S OUTFITTERS
Est. 2003

High-quality residential scheme in Leeds City Centre

BuyAssociation GetGround

From £197,000

Aire Gardens in Leeds City Park is a rare opportunity to acquire an apartment in a distinctive, tranquil pocket of the city, framed by tree-lined gardens and natural streams, yet only a 500m walk from Leeds Railway Station and the City Centre.

Positioned adjacent to the South Bank Regeneration area, the scheme benefits from one of Leeds' most transformational growth locations, combining the appeal of green space with exceptional connectivity both into and out of the city.

- Leeds property prices forecast to grow 28.2%*by 2029 - one of the UK's fastest-growing regional cities
- Just a 500m walk to Leeds Railway Station, offering direct links to London, Manchester and beyond
- Located adjacent to the £multi-billion South Bank regeneration – one of the UK's largest urban renewal projects set to double the size of Leeds city centre
- Boutique scheme of just 98 apartments, with private outdoor space, premium specification, and BTR-style amenities including gym, lounge and co-working areas – enhancing rental appeal and tenant retention
- Prices from £197,000, significantly below the Leeds average (£245,000), offering a compelling entry point with strong upside potential

Exclusive launch credit
BuyAssociation contributes **up to £250 per month** from the exchange of contracts. That's a direct boost to your returns, starting immediately. **terms and conditions apply.

For more information and to request your free brochure scan the QR code

0800 316 7344

The value of investments can go up and down, and BuyAssociation always recommends that you should seek independent financial advice. *Source: Savills Residential Forecast.

FUTON
COMPANY
Shelves that fit where other shelves don't
23 stores • futoncompany.co.uk • 0345 609 4455

Summer entertaining made effortless

Save £401

when you purchase any Quooker system with a CUBE and installation by a Quooker engineer

Offer ends 31st August 2026

Discover how Quooker can transform your Summer.

Enjoy instant 100°C boiling, chilled, and sparkling water – all from one tap. A Quooker tap can be installed in your existing kitchen in under two hours*, is simple to use, and impossible to live without.

Time-saving. Energy-efficient. Safe.

Quooker transforms everyday kitchen tasks while it can help you save time, reduce waste, and help to improve safety.

See it in action – from your own home.

Book a free live virtual demonstration with our expert team. They'll walk you through the features and answer any questions, one-to-one.

> *Quooker isn't just a tap,* ***it's a game changer in the kitchen,*** *and the kind of company that makes you feel good about where you've spent your money.*

Scan the QR code to unlock exclusive offers and to arrange a virtual demonstration or visit **quooker.co.uk**

Experience Centre

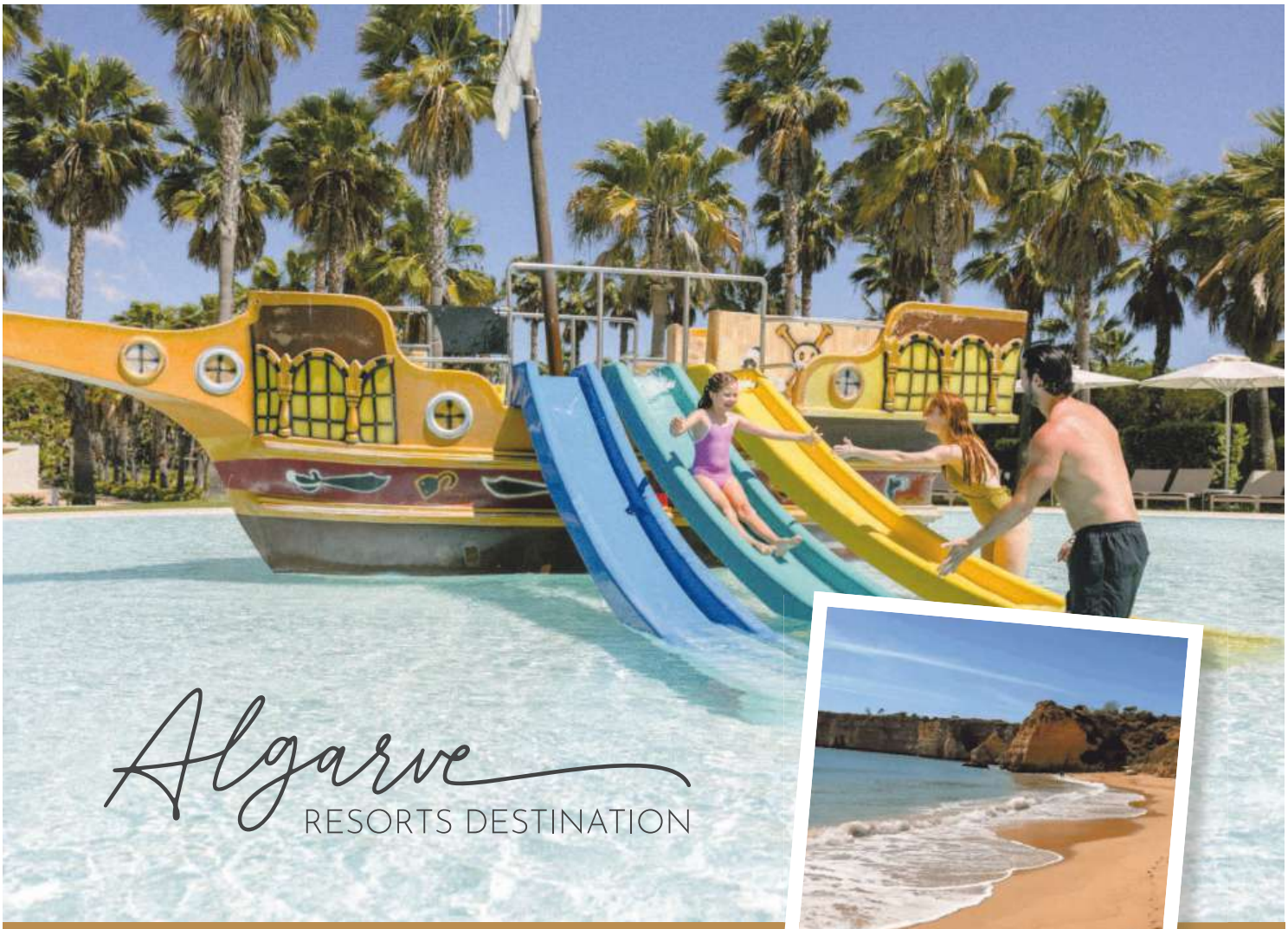
Beaumont Buildings, Great Ducie Street, Manchester, M3 1PQ

Quooker®

100°C BOILING, CHILLED AND SPARKLING WATER

The tap that does it all

*Installation time may vary depending on kitchen setup.



Algarve
RESORTS DESTINATION

ALGARVE • PORTUGAL

One Destination, Endless Experiences.

Where Atlantic light, championship golf and refined resort living come together.

Six resorts. Exceptional golf. One Algarve escape.

LAST CALL FOR SUMMER
BOOK NOW FROM 355€*

Kimpton Atlântico ALGARVE

MARRIOTT RESIDENCES ALGARVE SALGADOS

MARRIOTT RESORT ALGARVE SALGADOS

THE WESTIN ALGARVE SALGADOS BEACH RESORT

NAU HOTELS & RESORTS SAO RAFAEL SUITES ★★★★★ ALGARVE

BOOK NOW

algarveresortsdestination.com

visit Algarve Portugal

Price for a room at the Algarve Marriott Salgados Golf Resort & Spa, only at the official website. Rates subject to change on a daily basis without prior notice. Terms and Conditions apply.

Beta male
Robert Crampton

‘Do men really have more me-time than women? Ask my wife’

DAN KENNEDY

A survey last week said that men have much more “me-time” than do women. In the UK, we enjoy an average of five more hours of leisure each week than our wives, girlfriends, mothers or daughters. Even when a woman earns more than a man, she does more domestic labour and childcare than he does. His hobbies are ringfenced, hers aren’t. When a couple has a child, Dad’s access to leisure endures. Mum’s access is abruptly bricked up. His R&R time is, essentially, stolen from hers. He’s chillin’. She’s knackered.

Sounds familiar? Well, I’m not sure my wife would recognise the disparity. She’d say it was a lot more than five hours a week and not only because much of my job involves writing about myself, me-time in disguise. Nicola does less sitting on the sofa, less lying in bed, less luxuriating with a book on a delightfully torturous bus commute to the office. And when she gets to work, she doesn’t, as far as I know, set aside 20 minutes to plough through a huge mound of porridge while scouring the sports pages, interrupt me at your peril.

Also, while I did bin five-a-side football back in 1997 when our son, Sam, was born, I took up excessive alcohol consumption instead. I didn’t so much shut down one hobby as take up another, less tiring one. And yes, I’ve fought hard to protect and preserve other me-time activities as non-negotiables. Reading is the big one. But also recording my exercise stats, in detail, in different coloured felt-tip pens. That’s time-consuming. As is getting in my steps – 13,000 a day on average so far this year, not all of them strictly necessary for personal transportation purposes.

Most men will have their own version of these sacrosanct obligations, the red lines that cannot be crossed. Birdwatching. Gaming. Nights out with the lads. Golf with the lads. Cycling with the lads. Whatever. Triathlons are popular. I’ve known three divorces in which Ironman could have been cited as a co-respondent. Then there’s watching sport – absolutely essential. Maybe it’s the grand prix, qualifying and race day. That’s 24 weekends every year taken care of right there. Maybe it’s football. Your team, the top clubs, big European clashes, the national side. Rugby and cricket. Tennis, golf, athletics, snooker and, “C’mon, not now. This pole vault qualifier is a nailbiter,” etc. Not forgetting beach volleyball.

Meanwhile, the women in their lives are holding everything together, exhausted. Put like this, it’s a scandal. There’s no denying it – we’re taking the piss. Is there a defence though? Maybe, just maybe, what follows might fly.

Not long ago, my wife spent an hour mending the washing machine in one room while I did the puzzles at the back of Times2 in another. On the face of it, that looks bad for me. Nicola likes doing the puzzles too, but could we have swapped places? We could not, because I’d have flooded the house or electrocuted myself, or done something that invalidated the warranty and cost us £500.

Nicola, like many women, is a problem solver. In a less sexist world, she would probably have been an engineer. Yes, she was doing something essential, tricky, dirty and tiring while I had my feet up filling in Codeword. But, I submit, she was deriving a degree of satisfaction cleaning out the frankly minging filter, checking connections, changing fuses and... and whatever else she was doing. You could almost say that, as she sat there monitoring an exploratory rinse cycle, Nicola was having a spot of well-earned, good old me-time.

Or how about driving? Nicola likes driving. I like falling asleep while Nicola is driving. Who’s getting the me-time there? I’m getting the rest, yes. But what if my wife’s idea of quality me-time involves generally frenetic activity? While my ideal is closer to, well, unconsciousness?

I like being on my own. Nicola is way more sociable. She’s always out seeing her friends in London, or off travelling to where they are, in Cambridge, Cheshire, the New Forest, Donegal. Or she’s visiting her family in Hull or Edinburgh. She goes to our chalet in Kent twice as often as I do. When she’s there, she gardens. Meanwhile, I’m reading on the sofa at home. One of us is doing very little, one is in nonstop motion, but we’re both, I would argue, having me-time.

Not all chores are drudgery. Some are downright fun. I enjoy, for example, taking out the bins. And watering the garden, flushing the gutters, sweeping up leaves and vacuuming the yucca plant (best way to get the dust out). They’re jobs, but they’re also me-time. Isn’t it possible women feel the same way about the vastly more extensive range of apparently thankless tasks they perform? No? OK, fair enough. Worth a try. ■

robert.crampton@thetimes.co.uk

© Times Media Limited, 2026. Published and licensed by Times Media Limited, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF (020 7782 5000). Printed by Walstead Bicester Ltd, Oxfordshire. Not to be sold separately.

Feel fitter with a whole year of WithU

Times+ members can enjoy 12 months of complimentary access to the WithU fitness app. Offering personalised, goal-driven fitness plans, quick workouts and expert coaching – helping you build strength, improve fitness and stay mindful wherever you choose to train. It's designed to help you stay active and balanced, even on busy days.
Visit thetimes.com/withu

TIMES+ | WithU

T&Cs apply. Visit thetimes.com/withu for full details.

3 for £8

on delicious summer deli

Turn picky bits into a feast with our mix and match deli, including aperitivo platter filled with buttery nocellara olives, creamy provolone cheese and crisp sourdough breadsticks, crispy coronation chicken pastries and creamy mozzarella balls in a pine-nut and fresh basil pesto.

WAITROSE

The home of food lovers

Waitrose Thai Green Chicken Meatballs, 180g, £3.75. Waitrose Italian Aperitivo Selection 145g, £4.50. Waitrose Coronation Chicken Pastries, 100g, £4.00. Waitrose Mozzarella & Basil Pesto, 170g, £4.00. Selected stores and lines. Subject to availability. Offer ends 22 Sept. Minimum online spend and delivery charges apply. Prices may vary in Channel Islands, Little Waitrose & Partners and concessions. Prices correct at time of going to print. Serving Suggestion shown.